



2022 Synod Report

Diocese of Gary
Bishop Robert J. McClory

May 31, 2022
*Feast of the Visitation of
the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Overview: Disciples and Missionaries

As will be described below and in the attachments, our Diocese of Gary Synod 2022 has renewed our commitment to be disciples and missionaries. In response to Pope Francis’ call for a worldwide synod on synodality, Bishop Robert J. McClory initiated a process in August 2021 that was structured as an extended theological reflection. To begin this process, the clergy and the faithful of the Diocese were invited in Synod 2022 to “see, judge, and act” in discerning a path forward for all of us. See figure 1.

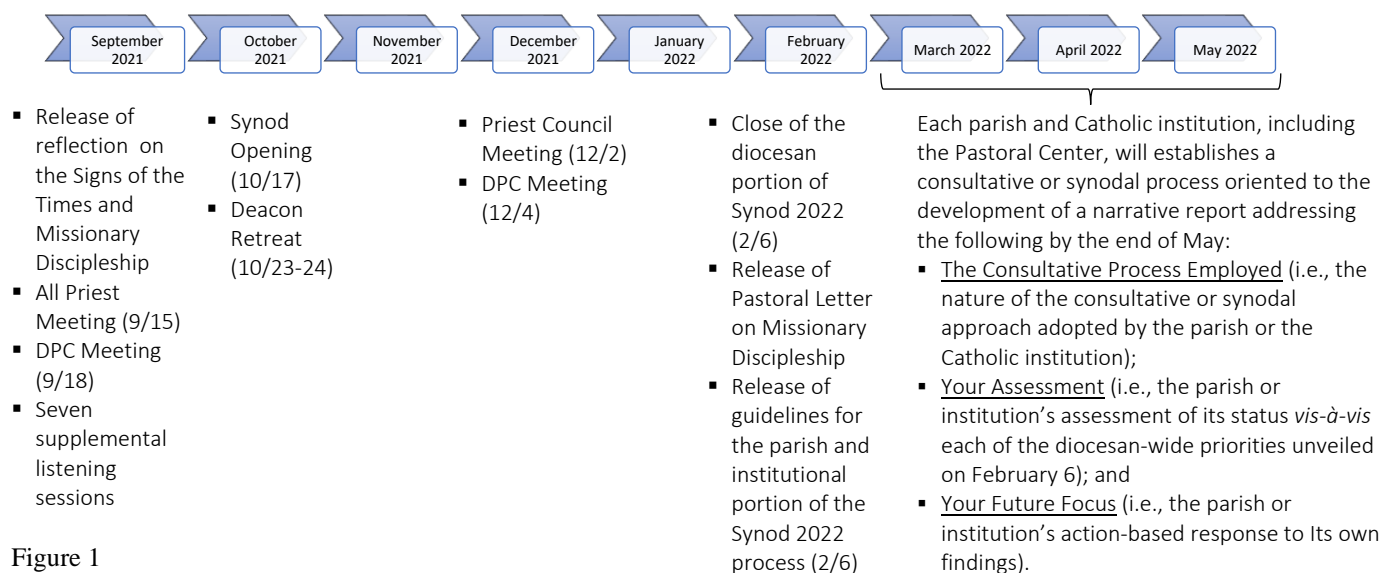


Figure 1

This approach worked well, in part, because the diocese had experienced a robust synod process in 2017 in which over 4,000 individuals participated under the leadership of Bishop Donald J. Hying. Eight broad themes or priorities had emerged out of that process: evangelization; sacraments, prayer, and worship; discipleship/formation; social teaching; marriage and family; young Catholics; stewardship; and vocations and leadership formation. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a clear need to “reboot” our commitment to missionary discipleship, the Diocese of Gary’s 2017 synod proved an ideal foundation for our current initiative. A summary of our

experience to date follows. It is organized under three headings traditionally associated with theological reflections — see, judge, act.

I. See: Reading the “Signs of the Times” and listening to one another

A steering committee comprised of the following individuals was appointed in September 2021 to advance this process: Father Kevin Huber, Chancellor; Father Declan McNicholas; Mike Wick, Chief of Staff; Colleen McGinty-Rabine, Director of Communications; Victoria Hathaway, Ministry Consultant for Youth and Young Adult Ministry; Erica Jimenez, Director of Intercultural and Other-abled Ministry; and Sean Martin, Director of Evangelization and Religious Education. Under the direction of Bishop McClory, Deacon Dan Lowery was tasked with coordinating this effort.

Bishop McClory and members of the steering committee were energized to a considerable extent by the statement of Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Papal Nuncio to the United States, on the occasion of Bishop McClory’s ordination as Bishop of the Diocese of Gary on February 11, 2020: “The Holy Father wants a missionary Church and His Holiness is counting on you [Bishop McClory] to lead the people of the Diocese of Gary to be both disciples and missionaries” and Bishop McClory’s episcopal motto as well: “We preach Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4-5).

In September 2021, a reflection piece entitled “Reading the Signs of the Times: An Urgent Call to Missionary Discipleship” was broadly distributed. Data documented in this paper pertained to parish membership and attachment, and sacrament trends over the last decade. Drawing on Luke’s Gospel and various documents written by Pope Francis, the document also included ten “commitments” pertaining to missionary discipleship. This document was used to provide a

common foundation for a series of listening sessions that extended through October 2021. This critical step in our synod process included an all-priests meeting, a deacon retreat, a Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, and seven “listening sessions” designed to solicit input from segments of the faithful whose voices often go unheeded. Most importantly, facilitated conversations were held with teenagers, young adults, representatives of our various inter-cultural ministries, and women religious. In all, more than 250 individuals participated in these listening sessions, all of which were organized around two questions pertinent to the reflection document shared with all participants. First, what should we make of these “signs of the times”? Do they suggest a need to re-examine our 2017 synod priorities? And second, how did we experience “synodality” in 2017? What aspects of this experience need to be reconsidered?

The 426 distinct comments recorded in these listening sessions were then distilled by the steering committee into 11 propositions for further consideration.

1. “Missionary discipleship” should serve as the lens through which we understand our primary responsibility as Christians to evangelize the world.
2. The diocese as a whole should adopt a “preferential option for young people,” which should be reflected in our approach to consultation, in our ministries, and in the allocation of diocesan and parish resources.
3. The diocese as a whole should commit itself in an intentional way to reach out to and engage those who find themselves on the margins of society and the Church.
4. Recognizing that the opportunities our diocese and our individual parishes have to form children in the faith is limited, every effort should be made to engage and support families as a primary locus of formation. Further, we should celebrate and support the family as the “domestic church.”

5. The diocese should reimagine our Catholic schools and our faith formation programs as prime venues for catechesis of both children and their parents.
6. The diocese should invest resources sufficient to develop a communications strategy with the capacity to engage young adults, those who are only marginally attached to the Church, and those who are estranged from the Church as well.
7. The diocese and individual parishes should formally assess the extent to which hospitality is afforded to guests, seekers, young people, and families.
8. In order to more fully form all of us as true missionary disciples, opportunities for proven parish renewal programs should be made available and promoted throughout the diocese.
9. Recognizing the seminal role of our priests and our need for vibrant leadership at this time, the Diocese of Gary should invite all of its priests into an experience of priestly renewal.
10. Priests and deacons should be encouraged to participate in formation sessions focused on homilies oriented specifically to the challenge of missionary discipleship.
11. The diocese as a whole should vigorously promote Sunday as a privileged occasion during which to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, as a day of rest, and as an invitation to reconcile with God, with ourselves, and with others.

II. Judge: Making sense of what we heard and learned

On Sunday, October 17, 2021, Bishop McClory presided at a Mass, which formally opened our synod process. In his homily, Bishop McClory spoke to the urgency of the moment now facing all of us. The invitees included all priests in the diocese and all members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Council on Young Adult Evangelization, the Diocesan Youth Council, the Intercultural Ministry Leadership Team, and the Deacon Leadership Team. Although Bishop

initiatives from our 2017 synod and the wisdom drawn from our 2021 listening sessions? To address this concern, the synod steering committee – under the active guidance of Bishop McClory – embarked on a “distilling process” designed to achieve these twin objectives. Two priorities emerged out of these deliberations, both of which were framed as declarative statements: first, “we are called to be disciples”; and second, “we are called to be missionaries.” The ordering of these two commitments was deemed important. We must first affirm and – where necessary – reclaim our fundamental identities as disciples of Jesus. Only then can we hope to be in a position to fulfill our obligation to be missionaries who “go make disciples.” Once these two foundational commitments were established, a series of evaluation questions were created in association with each to capture critical priorities that had clearly emerged out of our 2017 synod and out of our current synod process as well.

Bishop McClory then turned to his two primary consultative bodies to test our progress to date. On December 2, the Diocese’s Priests Council evaluated this mix of two priorities and their associated evaluation questions against three questions. First, is this mix of diocesan priorities responsive to the “signs of the times” and to our calling as missionary disciples? Second, *if* this mix of priorities was effectively pursued, would it make a positive difference in the Diocese of Gary, in our parishes, and in our Catholic institutions? And third, *if* this mix of priorities is to be pursued, what would it require of us? On December 4, the Diocesan Pastoral Council took up these same three questions. In both instances, the groups affirmed the synthesis of the work accomplished to date.

With a few minor changes, the following priorities and evaluation questions were then adopted for the Diocese of Gary and for our parishes. (A similar set of evaluation questions were developed for use by Pastoral Center staff and certain key Catholic institutions.)

A. *We are called to be disciples.*

1. Are our efforts in support of young families in our parish community effective in helping them embrace the essential identity of the family as the “domestic Church”?
2. Are our efforts effective in promoting faithful participation in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist?
3. Do our faith formation programs have a lasting and life-sustaining impact?
 - On our children?
 - On adults in our parish?
4. Are we effective in engaging teenagers and young adults in every aspect of parish life, including our liturgies, our ministries, and service on our various consultative bodies?
5. Do our Catholic schools form disciples who are sustained in their faith long after their time with us?
6. Do our liturgies and our service ministries ensure that all members of our community recognize Catholic social teaching as a constitutive part of our faith and the responsibility of all of the baptized?
7. Do we have sufficient capacities in place (i.e., a well-balanced mix of ministries, well-designed programmatic strategies, faithful and effective preaching, a comprehensive mix of formation opportunities, essential communications capacity, etc.) to support initiatives that show promise with respect to the priorities noted above?
8. Are our efforts to promote stewardship (i.e., the responsible and generous use of our time, talent, and treasure) effective and sufficient with respect to the priorities noted above?
9. Are we in need of parish renewal if we are to more proactively, faithfully, and effectively pursue initiatives pertinent to the priorities indicated above?

B. *We are called to be missionaries.*

1. Have we effectively reached out to those who have not returned to Church since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Are we effective in welcoming those outside of our community who are seeking a relationship with Jesus?
 - Non-Catholic families?
 - Non-Catholic teenagers and young adults?
 - Seekers and the disaffected among the families we serve in our faith formation programs and in our schools?
 - Disaffected Catholics who have distanced themselves from the Church?
3. Are we effective in welcoming and embracing those who live on the margins of society?
4. Is our Christian witness to the social teachings of the Church robust and visible?
5. Do we have sufficient capacities in place (i.e., a well-balanced mix of ministries, well-designed programmatic strategies, faithful and effective preaching, a comprehensive mix of formation opportunities, essential communications capacity, etc.) needed to faithfully express our shared identity as missionaries?

III. Act: Embracing our twin identities as disciples and as missionaries

The formal close of the diocesan-led portion of the Diocese of Gary's synod was celebrated on February 6 with a Mass at the Cathedral of Holy Angels. In a formal address following Mass, Bishop McClory described our ongoing experience of the synod and provided direction to all in attendance regarding next steps. In addition, Bishop McClory shared five pledges as we transition

from an intensive period of preparatory work at the diocesan level to an extended focus in our parishes and Catholic institutions:

- To support pastors, staff, parishes, and Catholic institutions in the Diocese of Gary in their processes of assessment and planning at the parish and institutional level of our synod.
- To personally visit each parish in the diocese in order to listen, learn, share and to support each parish in its synodal effort.
- To initiate a comparable assessment and planning process in the Pastoral Center.
- To reassess our diocesan consultative bodies (e.g., our Diocesan Pastoral Council and our various commissions) in order to advance our shared commitment to synodality.
- To renew and revise as needed the financial assistance provided to parishes in support of action steps developed in their parish-level planning processes.

Most importantly, Bishop McClory shared a pastoral letter on missionary discipleship entitled “*We Proclaim Jesus as Lord!*” and recommended it as a foundation for an extended formation process into which he invited all of diocesan parishes and institutions. A copy is included in the appendix [Appendix 1], as is an abridged version of the pastoral letter [Appendix 2]. He also foreshadowed the coming National Eucharistic Revival, which will be launched on June 19, 2022.

At the close of the diocesan-led portion of our synod, a letter was issued to all pastors in the Diocese of Gary concerning the parish and institutional portion of our synod process [Appendix 3]. Pastors were asked to establish robust consultative processes for this portion of the initiative. It was noted that an *ad hoc* team could serve this purpose, but that, for many parishes, the pastoral council or leadership team could serve this purpose after sufficient diversity of background and perspective had been assured. After a period of formation, Bishop McClory invited each parish

and institutional leadership team to methodically work through the evaluation questions associated with each of the two priorities that had emerged out of the preparatory phase of our synod process. Following the conclusion of these extended assessments, Bishop McClory asked each parish and institution to develop a select set of action steps with respect to the two foundational commitments/priorities that emerged out of our synod process. Finally, Bishop McClory asked each parish and Catholic institution to summarize their efforts in a narrative report that (1) describes the consultative process used and explains why it was chosen, (2) the parish or institution's status regarding each series of evaluation questions associated with our two diocesan priorities, and (3) the parish or institution's action steps for moving forward. A due date of May 31, 2022 was established for this purpose. A schedule of train-the-trainer webinars was shared to address topics pertaining to various tools and techniques for listening, discernment, and navigating challenges.. Bishop McClory also encouraged pastors to use Pentecost Sunday, June 5, as an opportune time to share their action plans more widely [Appendix 4].

Conclusion

To this point, our synod process has been highly productive. With respect to the “signs of the times,” we believe we now “see” more clearly, that we have “judged” in a manner faithful to our tradition and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and that our still evolving process will enable us to “act” ever more faithfully over time as disciples of Jesus who are all called to mission. Indeed, we are hopeful that it will set the stage for the productive and faithful formation of disciples and missionaries in the Diocese of Gary for many years to come. We are thankful for the opportunity to have journeyed thus far in this process with the universal Church under the leadership of Pope Francis and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Appendix

1. Bishop Robert J. McClory's pastoral letter on missionary discipleship dated February 2, 2022 entitled "*We Proclaim Jesus as Lord!*"
2. Abridged version of Bishop Robert J. McClory's pastoral letter
3. Letter to pastors dated February 4, 2022 pertaining to the parish and institutional portion of the diocesan synod process
4. Letter to pastors dated May 3, 2022 pertaining to parish-based action plans

A stained glass illustration of Jesus Christ, depicted from the chest up. He has long, wavy brown hair and a beard, and is wearing a white robe with a gold and red sash. Behind his head is a large, ornate halo with a cross-like shape in the center. The halo contains the Greek letters Iota Chi (ΙΧ) at the top, Omega (Ω) on the left, and Eta (Η) on the right. The background of the halo and the surrounding area are filled with blue and white stained glass patterns. The text "We Proclaim Jesus as Lord!" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

We Proclaim Jesus as Lord!

--- A Pastoral Letter on Missionary Discipleship ---

MOST REV. ROBERT J. MCCLORY

Bishop, Diocese of Gary

February 2, 2022 - Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

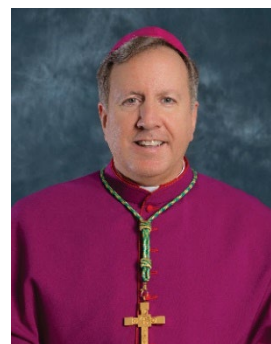
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“ *We proclaim Jesus as Lord
and ourselves as your servants
for Jesus’ sake.* ”

— 2 Corinthians 4:5

As I approach my second anniversary as your bishop, I am reminded of our gathering at the Cathedral of the Holy Angels on February 11, 2020, for my episcopal ordination. At that time, I shared my episcopal motto “Iesum Dominum Praedicamus,” taken from the first part of 2 Corinthians 4:5, “We proclaim Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” On that occasion, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Papal Nuncio to the United States, issued the following challenge:



“The Holy Father wants a missionary Church and His Holiness is counting on you [Bishop McClory] to lead the people of the Diocese of Gary to be both disciples and missionaries.”

These words continue to inspire and guide our local Catholic Church.

This pastoral letter is intended as an extended reflection on missionary discipleship: What does it mean to be a disciple and a missionary? How can we proclaim Jesus as Lord? What does it mean to be an outward focused Church serving a hurting world? These questions and themes arose as a prominent part of our synod discussions initiated in 2021 at the prompting of Pope Francis, who invited all the world’s dioceses to enter a synodal process on the topic of synodality, our way of being Church at this pivotal moment in time.

Our recent synod experience is also an effort to refresh the extraordinary gift of Synod 2017 under the leadership of my predecessor, Bishop Donald J. Hying, culminating in his pastoral letter re-enforcing the Great Commission to “go make disciples.” (Matthew 28:19-20) To accept the charge to “go make disciples” is another way of saying that we are called to be missionary disciples. The one who sends us out is Jesus himself.

It is important that we ground our efforts in an abiding trust in Jesus as we pivot from the diocesan portion of our synod process to the parish and institutional portion in which the work of our Synod will unfold over an extended time. To assist with this effort, in this letter I offer three

fundamental reflections on our faith. I first examine the relationship that exists between our calling as disciples and the missionary impulse that is so central to the Church's work in the world, using the third mystery of the "Mysteries of Light," or Luminous Mysteries, introduced to the world by Saint John Paul II. I further articulate the meaning of "missionary discipleship," drawing on the Gospel of Luke and the insights of Pope Francis. Finally, I offer an image I believe reflects or illustrates this pivotal moment in the life of our local Church — the image of a bonfire.

I hope these reflections will provide a common reference as together we boldly undertake the work that lies before us. May it be shared to serve as a formational foundation for all who will participate in consultative processes at the parish and institutional level as we seek to rediscover our identity as both disciples and missionaries.

DISCIPLES AND MISSIONARIES

In 2002, Saint John Paul II made a significant change to one of the most revered devotions in the Church, the Rosary. He added the **Luminous Mysteries** to a tradition previously comprised of three sets of mysteries: the Joyful Mysteries, which celebrate the infancy narratives and Jesus' childhood; the Sorrowful Mysteries, which venerate the passion and death of Jesus; and the Glorious Mysteries, which recall the resurrection of Jesus and the imparting of the Holy Spirit and which honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as well. The Mysteries of Light, known commonly as the Luminous Mysteries, focus in a particular way on Jesus' three-year public ministry and include his Baptism, the Wedding Feast of Cana, the Proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration and the Institution of the Eucharist.

I call your attention to the third of these Luminous Mysteries: **Proclamation of the Kingdom**. It speaks in a powerful way to our two-fold identity as disciples and as missionaries. In fact, these callings cannot be separated from each other. A missionary is not a particular kind of disciple. To be a disciple is to be a missionary, a truth revealed in the Proclamation of the Kingdom, the Good News of Jesus.

“ *Jesus is the Good News!* ”

It is important to understand that we cannot separate Jesus' Proclamation of the Good News from his person. **Jesus is the Good News!** Although the four Gospels differ somewhat in their portrayal of the Messiah, they attest to his core message with great clarity: the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel! Extraordinary acts of mercy were coupled with this proclamation of the Good News — acts of healing and the forgiveness of sins.

In Jesus, the power of God was projected into the world with a new intimacy. In proclaiming the Good News, Jesus affirmed that what generation upon generation had prayed for, waited for, hoped for and longed for was him. In Jesus, everything changed! Those who heard his voice were no longer limited to hoping for peace, comfort, consolation, healing and freedom. These human desires are now realized in his person. Jesus is Emmanuel, God is with us.

Jesus' mission did not end with the Proclamation of the Kingdom. He invited his followers into a deep and abiding relationship with him. He embraced them as aspiring disciples and he challenged them to be missionaries as well. Jesus proclaimed the Good News and then shared his saving mission with his disciples, encouraging them to do the same.

We, too, are invited to heed the voice of the Master. We, too, can be transformed by his presence in our lives and his example. **Having encountered Christ, we long to experience his love ever more deeply. We recognize Jesus as so much more than a friend, wisdom figure or folk hero. He is our Savior, our hope and our destiny;** and we are challenged each day to imitate him and so participate in his ongoing work in the world.

We are called to be fully active in our discipleship and this means that we must be missionaries, too. This is the great challenge of our time. Jesus does not call some of us to be disciples and others to be missionaries. To be a disciple of Jesus, one must embrace the missionary calling, too. Unfortunately, few of us feel prepared to embrace the missionary responsibility that is fundamental to discipleship. Yet as disciples, we realize that the Good News cannot be contained. The truth about Jesus and his promise of salvation should be shared with everyone! It must be shared and not just with those who look like us, act like us, or sound like us and not just with

“ *How am I being called to
share Jesus, to serve others?* ”

someone from our own socioeconomic class or faith community and not just with someone with whom we tend to agree — but with everyone.

Missionary activity comes in all shapes and sizes. Few among us will be asked to stand on a street corner testifying to God’s love, even though some in our diocese are committed to this kind of evangelization. For most of us, our unique response to the missionary impulse will emerge over time as we ponder a question that applies to all aspiring disciples: “How am I being called to share Jesus, to serve others?” This question applies to all of us, including the homebound whose missionary work may be focused solely – and beautifully – on prayer.

Matthew’s Gospel explains the two-fold nature of missionary discipleship: “Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, he was teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and curing every disease and illness.” (Matthew 9:35) Jesus was preaching and healing, calling others to repentance and inviting them ever more deeply into the Kingdom of God. Matthew goes on: “At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them,” (Matthew 9:36) because they were troubled and alone.

The crowds needed a shepherd. They needed Jesus and Jesus did not disappoint. He did not leave them troubled or alone. He was then and remains the Good Shepherd. And because of this, we cannot leave those whom we encounter troubled or alone, not if we are true followers of Christ. We have the answer, the remedy, the ministry and the mission needed to proclaim the Kingdom in our time. This answer, this remedy, this ministry and this mission are meant to be shared now, both near and far. We certainly should have a personal relationship with Jesus, yet we must also be a missionary.

Pope Francis uses the image of a field hospital in making this point. A field hospital is pitched among the wounded. Sometimes, immediate, life-sustaining care must be provided in a makeshift facility. We can trust that we have the treatment that is so desperately needed by those among us who are troubled and by those among us who have been abandoned. We can bind these spiritual wounds, not because we are special or uniquely endowed, but because we have Jesus and because we are compelled as disciples of Jesus to share the Good News, to bring healing and reconciliation when and where we are.

Matthew's Gospel goes on to identify a chief obstacle to Jesus' ongoing work in the world: "(T)he harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few, so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." (Matthew 9:37) Again, this is a principal challenge of our time. We are called to be missionary disciples that are willing to join the Master's harvest.

If you only look on the surface, many people today seem to be living happy, fulfilling lives. Few appear to need anything more – just look at social media. We should not be deceived by appearances. We know that many of these virtual presentations are less than fully honest and sadly superficial. We know, too, that there is considerable suffering and sadness behind many of these facades. Many are troubled and many are alone in our own time and place.

Our world is in need of disciples who are willing to tend to the needs of all — both the baptized and unbaptized. Our world needs disciples who will share the Good News, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, Son of the Father, whose love and mercy are available to everyone. Let us boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord. Let us bravely bring healing when and wherever we can.

Sharing the Good News does not require perfection.

We may be “wounded healers,” but that is okay. Few among us have achieved perfection in any sense of the term. **Sharing the Good News does not require perfection.** Indeed, the Good News we proclaim is God's Good News, not our own. We are simply asked to make it manifest in the world. The healing we effect is God's gift. We are privileged to share it as best we can. And the reconciliation we hope to engender in and among those whom we encounter is God's peace and God's hope for all of us. We are the voice, the hands and the feet of the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27) As St. Paul put it, we are challenged to put on the “mind of Christ.” (Philippians 2:5) It is Jesus who continues to act in the world in and through us.

We are indeed called as disciples *and* missionaries. The first relationship both informs and requires the second. Further, we are called at this moment in time to serve in a world that is very much in need of disciples and very much in need of missionaries, too.

The call to fulfill the Great Commission was not reserved to “good times” or to favorable conditions. Much has happened over the intervening 24 months since I was ordained your bishop. Perhaps most obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us, bringing much suffering and intensifying isolation and social unrest.

COVID-19 and several other challenges have also revealed disconcerting trends of a longer-term nature. We know, for instance, that membership in our parishes is down and so, too, participation in Sunday worship and the sacraments. This is true, not just in the Diocese of Gary, but in the nation as a whole. Some have concluded that the Church is in a state of permanent decline and others wrangle over the precise cause or causes of these developments. Indeed, we could all too easily be disheartened or even divided by these “signs of the times.”

“ *As believers, we are called
to bring hope and healing.* ”

As believers, we are called to bring hope and healing. Jesus has not abandoned us in this task. We are not alone. Pope Francis has affirmed this article of faith. “I’m never hopeless,” he insists. “We are accompanied.”¹ Further, “I take hope from the last words of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel: ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:20).”² I, too, take great hope that Jesus is with us as we respond to his command to be missionary disciples.

Yes, we proclaim Jesus as Lord!

TEN PRINCIPLES OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

T*o whom should we look for guidance as disciples walking together during this season of prayer, conversation and invitation? We look to Jesus* as revealed in the Gospels. We look, as well, to Pope Francis, who has built upon the work of his predecessors Saint Paul VI, Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI in producing a substantial body of work on the nature of missionary discipleship, most notably in *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel.

We are particularly blessed that in 2022 the Church will focus on the Gospel of Luke during the liturgical year that ends on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Luke's Gospel is celebrated as the Gospel of hospitality and acceptance. As noted by Brenden Byrne, "(t)he whole idea of 'acceptance/nonacceptance' is pivotal to Luke's understanding of the ministry of Jesus. The 'acceptable year of the Lord' is the season of God's 'hospitality' to the human race, which it is Jesus' mission to proclaim and enact."³

It is in Luke's Gospel, too, that the ministry of evangelization is explained most clearly and most notably in the person of the Blessed Mother. The assurance that we are not alone is disclosed in both Luke's Gospel and the continuance of his narrative in the Acts of the Apostles. Whereas Jesus is the driving force of the narrative in Luke's Gospel, the Holy Spirit assumes this pivotal role in Acts. Jesus' disciples are empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue his ministry — the proclamation of the Good News of the Father's love.

“ *Our call to missionary discipleship will require a renewed commitment to hospitality.* ”

These descriptions in Luke's Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles apply to the challenges we face today with respect to the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) Our call to missionary discipleship will require a renewed commitment to hospitality. It will require that we boldly take up the ministry of Jesus in our time, never forgetting that we are not alone in this struggle.

We can discern ten distinct principles pertaining to missionary discipleship within the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles: (1) *We proclaim Jesus as Lord*, (2) *We are called to be missionary disciples*, (3) *We invite others into a personal encounter with Jesus*, (4) *This is God's work, not our own*, (5) *Prayer and hard work are required of us*, (6) *Our efforts as missionary disciples will require our own ongoing conversion*, (7) *Joy should be evident in our invitation to others to enter into a personal encounter with Jesus*, (8) *Healing and reconciliation are central to our efforts*, (9) *An inviting and welcoming outreach is essential to our efforts* and (10) *We should embrace a sense of urgency in this work*.

Each of these principles will be addressed, with insights shared from Cycle C of the Sunday Lectionary and the wisdom of Pope Francis.



PRINCIPLE ONE

WE PROCLAIM JESUS AS LORD —2 *Corinthians* 4:5

Luke's Gospel reveals Jesus as more than a wise man, more than a teacher, more than a healer and more than a Jewish prophet. In fact, he is much more. The Apostolic Tradition, drawing on the Gospels, affirms Jesus as the Son of God who was incarnate of the Virgin Mary. He is revealed as the Son of God who suffered, died and was buried, only to rise again from the dead. On the Third Sunday of Advent (Cycle C), we hear that Jesus is greater than John and that he "will come to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:10-18) After Christmas, as we recall Jesus' baptism, we hear the voice that came down from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22) In the Gospel reading from the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C), Jesus declares: "Today this Scripture passage [i.e., a year acceptable to the Lord] is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21) Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture!

On Ash Wednesday, Jesus invites us to respond to his offer of salvation in these direct words from the Gospel of Mark: "Repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15) During the Third Sunday in Lent (Cycle C), in Luke's account of the Transfiguration, the voice of the Father is heard again: "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." (Luke 9:35) During the Triduum, we will enter into Jesus' passion and death and at the Easter Vigil Mass, Luke's Gospel will recall the empty tomb and the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that he would "rise on the third day." (Luke 24:7) This will be followed by Luke's account of the Ascension in the Acts of the Apostles, in which Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, (Acts 1:1-11), and also the inauguration of the mission of the Church by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-11)

“ *God loved me and gave himself up for me...
(this is) what calls us to be missionary disciples.* ”

—Pope Francis

The Church does not shy away from these truths. As noted in the Baptismal Rite, "(t)his is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord." We are not free to dilute these truths as we "go forth to make disciples." Pope Francis is clear in this regard: **"The firm center of Christianity is the essential proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It means that God loved me and gave himself up for me. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His love on the cross, are what calls us to be missionary disciples."**⁴ Indeed, we can never presume to "domesticate the power of the face of Christ."⁵ Pope Francis advises us, instead, to abide always in a "reverence for the truth. This is the humility of heart which recognizes that the word is always beyond us...[As Pope John Paul II put it], 'we are neither its masters or owners, but its guardians, heralds and servants.'"⁶



Pope Francis encourages all missionary disciples to concentrate on the ‘essentials of the faith, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary...’



At the same time, Pope Francis encourages all missionary disciples to concentrate on the **“essentials of the faith, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary... (W)hat shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead.”⁷** The proclamation of Jesus’ suffering, death, burial and resurrection must stand foremost in the “hierarchy of truths”⁸ we proclaim.

Reflection:

- Do we shy away from the *scandal of the cross* in our proclamation of the word and in our teaching?
- Do we shy away from the truths of the faith when we share our own journey of discipleship with others?
- Does our preaching proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and does it invite a response on the part of the listener and compel those to whom it is proclaimed to share it with others?

PRINCIPLE TWO

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

We acknowledge Jesus as priest, prophet and king — three identities shared with each of us at our baptism. Having been anointed as such, we are compelled to continue the work of Jesus in our journey. We are to do as he did. During his public ministry, Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, he healed and he confronted evil. We see this three-fold dynamic at work most clearly in Luke’s Gospel, as Jesus sends his closest associates out ahead of him. “He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases and he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal [the sick].” (Luke 9:1–2) Jesus then extends this same three-fold mission to another 72 disciples in chapter 10. They, too, are directed to proclaim the Good News, to heal those in need of healing and to confront evil. As Gerhard Lohfink notes, “[Jesus’ disciples] are to do exactly what Jesus does. They share his fate, his duties, his joys and his sorrows.”⁹ And in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke’s account reveals that this is exactly what the disciples do. They carry on Jesus’ three-fold mission — they live out his three-fold identity as priest, prophet and king.

And this applies to us, too. This three-fold mission is a consequence of our baptism and our sharing in Jesus’ three-fold identity as priest, prophet and king. It is not optional — it is what it means to be a missionary disciple.

Pope Francis has affirmed this understanding of missionary discipleship: “Evangelization is the task of the Church. The Church, as the agent of evangelization, is more than an organic and hierarchical institution; she is first and foremost a people advancing on its pilgrim way toward God.”¹⁰ And this involves more than just a few among us. All Christians are called to participate in this essential work: “**In virtue of their baptism, all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples...**”¹¹

“*In virtue of their baptism, all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples...*”
— Pope Francis

This focus of the Church’s work extends well beyond the faithful who find their way to our pews each week. According to Pope Francis, the new evangelization must be “carried out in three principal settings. In the first place, we can mention the area of **ordinary pastoral ministry...** A second area is that of **the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism**, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith... Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel **to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him.**”¹²

The Church is not free to preach exclusively to the choir. All are called to holiness. Hunkering down as a remnant Church in the midst of a hostile world is not an option for missionary disciples.

Our efforts in this regard must exhibit a certain boldness born out of our trust in God. As Pope Francis notes, “(h)oliness is also *parrhesia* (candid speech): it is boldness, an impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in the world...How often we are tempted to keep close to the shore! Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets...”¹³

At the same time, Pope Francis is aware of the anxiety this understanding of missionary discipleship can engender in some. He affirms that “(f)ear of the mission can be a sign of the Holy Spirit. We feel, at once, both inadequate to the task and called to it.”¹⁴ He assures us that great learning is not required. People respond to authentic witness more than to learned discourse.

According to Pope Francis, “People are looking for someone to listen to them. Someone willing to grant them time, to listen to their dramas and difficulties. This is what I call the ‘apostolate of the ear,’ and it is important. Very important.”¹⁵

Reflection:

- Do we recognize missionary discipleship as an essential aspect of our Christian identity?
- Does our proclamation of the Word of God and our Christian witness reflect our commitment to this essential aspect of our baptismal identity?
- Do we understand our call as missionaries to include the baptized, the fallen away and unbelievers?

PRINCIPLE THREE

WE INVITE OTHERS TO A PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

Although we are commissioned to proclaim Jesus as Lord, it is not enough to distill the person of Jesus into a static set of dogmatic statements. As Donald Senior has noted: “It is not really part of the Christian program that people should simply ‘know about’ Jesus. Genuine Christianity is based on knowing Jesus. The urgency of the Christian mission since its beginning has been that people should come to know Jesus personally and, because of that relationship, to transform their lives.”¹⁶ Pope Francis quotes Pope Benedict XVI in making this same point: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”¹⁷

The compelling nature of this invitation is revealed in Luke’s Gospel reading for the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C), in which Jesus confronts Peter with the question all Christians must face at one time or another: “Who do you say that I am?” Peter responds: “The Christ of God.” (Luke 9:18-24) As we know, this leap of faith comes at a cost for Peter, as it does for all disciples. Later in Luke’s Gospel, when an aspiring disciple hesitates in responding, Jesus reminds him of the cost of discipleship. (Luke 9:51-62) Christian discipleship requires more than intellectual assent and is more than a casual commitment. It requires a personal relationship that is all-encompassing and gives direction and meaning to life.

Pope Francis affirms this understanding of relationship: “At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life. It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising with him.”¹⁸ He thus invites

“ *Pope Francis invites all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.* ”

“all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them...”¹⁹ Why? Because with Jesus, life becomes “richer” and with him it is “easier to find meaning in everything.”²⁰

This is why we evangelize, according to Pope Francis. “**A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks with him, breaths with him, works with him...** A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody.”²¹ Indeed, “(o)n the lips of the catechist, the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten [and] strengthen you.’”²²

How this invitation is shared in our time will depend on the audience to which it is conveyed. Some nominal Catholics and even some who are disillusioned or angry with the Church may retain

some semblance of a relationship with Jesus or at least the memory of one. It is a greater challenge for those whose “social imagination” can no longer consider the possibility of a God who loves them and cares for them.

“ *It is helpful to think of encountering Jesus and conversion as a lifelong process.* ”

It is helpful to think of encountering Jesus and conversion as a lifelong process. First, we want to bring people to an encounter with Jesus. Then, we encourage them to respond to that love and to grow daily as his disciples. Finally, those who are transformed by his love are called to give witness to the power of his mercy to others. Evangelization and discipleship should be part of the ordinary life of every Christian as we share the one whom we have encountered with those who have forgotten about him or who may have never heard the message of the Gospel.

As we anticipate and encounter questions, we are not without hope and guidance. The Church affirms that certain questions are universal and are asked still, in our post-modern culture. “(I)n the face of modern developments there is a growing body of people who are asking the most fundamental of all questions or are glimpsing them with keener insight: *What is humanity? What is the meaning of suffering, evil, death, which have not been eliminated by all of this progress? What is the purpose of these achievements, purchased at so high a price? What can people contribute to society? What can they expect from it? What happens after this earthly life has ended?*”²³

The response to these most basic of questions can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “By love, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. He has thus provided the definitive, superabundant answer to the questions man asks himself about the meaning and purpose of his life.”²⁴ In the words of St. Peter, “Master, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

Reflection:

- In our proclamation of the word and in our teaching, do we stress abstract truths over the need for a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Do we understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Do we effectively communicate this understanding of discipleship to others?
- Have we been adequately awakened to a hunger for a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Do our RCIA and Religious Education Programs use the stories of Jesus in the Sunday Lectionary in order to draw participants into a deeper relationship with Jesus?
- Do we offer a full continuum of adult education and formation opportunities in our parishes? In our ministries in the Diocese of Gary?
- Are we committed to reaching out to lapsed Catholics, the “unchurched,” and seekers in order to invite them, too, into an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus?

PRINCIPLE FOUR

THIS IS GOD’S WORK, NOT OUR OWN

We should not assume for a moment that our efforts to evangelize the world or even our own family members and friends are dependent on us. The work of missionary discipleship is God’s work. Jesus reminded his closest associates of this near the end of his three-year ministry: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him.” (John 6:44) Jesus initiated his relationships with his closest collaborators. In evangelizing others, we simply convey or affirm Jesus’ invitation to those who seek him. We cooperate to the best of our abilities when and where we can. Our success in evangelizing others is not dependent on *our* efforts, but in faith we make the effort — even though we cannot really be certain what “success” might mean in any given encounter.

“*God walks with us even in our most challenging moments. He walks with us as we labor in his vineyard as missionary disciples.*”

The reading for the Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time (Cycle C) is apocalyptic in nature (Luke 21:5-19). Despite its dark tone, Jesus consoles his disciples with these words: “Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.” This teaching does not negate the need for our best efforts in proclaiming Jesus as Lord. It reminds us that God walks with us even in our most challenging moments. He walks with us as we labor in his vineyard as missionary disciples.

Pope Francis affirms this view: **“The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative. ‘He has loved us first.’ (1 Jn 4:19)”**²⁵ Moreover, our success in evangelizing others cannot be assessed in human terms: “Because we do not always see [the seeds we plant] growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks.”²⁶

Given the formidable challenges we face, the failure to recognize this truth can lead to discouragement, an ever-present possibility Pope Francis has confronted directly: “The complaint that ‘everything is broken’ is answered by the claim that ‘it can’t be fixed,’ or ‘what can I do?’ This feeds into disillusionment and despair...”²⁷

“No words of encouragement will be enough,” according to Pope Francis, “unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel.”²⁸

Reflection:

- Do we earnestly pray for the graces needed to fulfill God's hopes and dreams for our parish communities? For the diocese as a whole? For the universal Church?
- How do we understand what it means to be successful as a parish community? As missionary disciples?
- How do we measure our success in this regard?
- Does knowing that the work of making disciples belongs primarily to God hold us back or somehow "let us off the hook?"

PRINCIPLE FIVE

PRAYER AND HARD WORK WILL BE REQUIRED OF US

Luke's Gospel does not shy away from depicting the hard work of missionary discipleship. In the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday in Lent (Cycle C), Jesus shares the story of an unfruitful fig tree. The gardener saves the fig tree from the orchard owner's wrath by promising to "cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it." The gardener is then granted a year in which to revive the fig tree. (Luke 13:1-9) When it was written, this story was probably understood as a parable about Israel. We can understand the fig tree as wayward mankind, too and the gardener as the Church. Hard work will be required if we are to realize God's hopes and dreams for his people, just as hard work was required in the case of the fig tree.

In this same reading, Jesus uses two additional images to convey the nature of the work that may be required of us to fulfill God's purposes. The first is a builder who must "calculate the cost" of constructing a tower before proceeding, lest "onlookers should laugh at him." The second is a general who must determine if his ten thousand troops will be sufficient to the task before he goes into battle. (Luke 14:25-33) Making disciples may be God's work, but our part will require planning, resource management and effective execution.

“ *The way of
missionary discipleship
is the way of the cross.* ”

As disciples of Jesus, we should not expect thanks per se, just as we should not anticipate an easy path. **The way of missionary discipleship is the way of the cross.** The reading from Luke's Gospel for the Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C) makes this clear: "Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from the plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'" (Luke 17:10) This may sound harsh to our ears, but it is reflective of Jesus' obedient stance before the Father. As disciples of Jesus, it should guide us in our stance before the Father as well.

The invitation to wait on tables is a motif central to our understanding of ministry. It is used to describe the selection of the seven Hellenists and their call to "wait on tables" in the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 6:1-7) Unfortunately, we cannot assume that this ethic is the norm in today's Church.

Pope Francis is unstinting in his criticism of those among us who suffer from “paralysis and acedia” (i.e., spiritual sloth or apathy). In Pope Francis’ view:

“This pastoral acedia can be caused by a number of things. Some fall into it because they throw themselves into unrealistic projects and are not satisfied simply to do what they reasonably can. Others, because they lack the patience to allow processes to mature; they want everything to fall from heaven. Others, because they are attached to a few projects or vain dreams of success. Others, because they have lost real contact with people and so depersonalize their work that they are more concerned with the road map than with the journey itself. Others fall into acedia because they are unable to wait; they want to dominate the rhythm of life. Today’s obsession with immediate results makes it hard for pastoral workers to tolerate anything that smacks of disagreement, possible failure, criticism, the cross.”²⁹

According to Pope Francis, discontent in the Church can impede the hard work of missionary discipleship: “(A)mong Catholics of an isolated conscience, there is never a shortage of reasons for criticizing the Church, the bishops, or the Pope: either we are behind the times, or we have surrendered to modernity; we are not what we should be or supposedly once were. In this way, they justify withholding and separating themselves from the forward march of the People of God. Rather than throwing themselves into the great task of evangelizing our world in communion with the Body, they remain huddled in ‘their’ group of purists, guardians of the truth.”³⁰

Reflection:

- Do we know what to do in order to evangelize nominal Catholics? Those who are disaffected from the Church? The unchurched? Seekers?
- Have we marshaled the resources needed to encourage evangelization? At the parish level? At the diocesan level?
- Do we withhold our best efforts to evangelize others because of inertia, a fear of failure, or discouragement?
- Does anger harbored against the Church or against others in the Church inhibit our effectiveness as missionary disciples?
- Does our community need to be renewed in order to fulfill God’s calling to missionary discipleship?

PRINCIPLE SIX

OUR EFFORTS AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES WILL REQUIRE OUR OWN ONGOING CONVERSION

How could this not be so, given the road walked by Jesus? On the First Sunday of Lent (Cycle C), we recall Jesus' time in the desert. (Luke 4:1-13) This is a pivotal moment in Luke's Gospel in which Jesus confronts and surmounts the same three temptations to which Adam and Eve had succumbed in the Garden of Eden.³¹

In the first temptation, Jesus experiences intense hunger and so the devil encourages him to turn the stones lying about into bread. The bread featured in this story reminds us of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, which so tempted Adam and Eve. Employing Ignatius Loyola's understanding of root sin,³² the bread featured in Luke's Gospel — like the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden — symbolizes our human desire for “stuff” and for unhealthy, self-gratifying experiences of one kind or another. It symbolizes the unhealthy materialism and self-centeredness to which most of us can easily become addicted — a debilitating root sin, in fact, that can lead to so many other sins, all of which can wreak havoc in our lives. Jesus navigated these human attractions in a way that Adam and Eve failed to do.

In the second temptation, Jesus confronts the experience of abandonment. Sensing his isolation, the devil ridicules Jesus. He dismisses him as a fool just as the serpent ridiculed Eve as a fool in the Garden of Eden. “You are so important Jesus, you are so very special,” the devil seems to say. “Show us, Jesus. Throw yourself off of this cliff, so that we can see you being ‘rescued’ by the angels the Father will surely send on your behalf. Show us, Jesus. Show all of us.” The devil pricks Jesus' presumed vanity just as the serpent in the Garden of Eden pricked Eve's vanity. The devil appeals to our human need to feel loved and our human need to feel special or unique. Jesus rejects the devil's enticements and, in doing so, transcends any temptation to vanity.

The devil senses a certain vulnerability in Jesus and delivers a third temptation. The devil appeals to something that lies deep in so many of us — human pride. He shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and promises all of them to Jesus if he will but “prostrate himself” in worship, not to the Father, but to the devil himself. Pride manifests itself in the narcissistic conceit that we know best. It can manifest itself, too, in the belief that we deserve the best, for one reason or another. In a similar way, the devil promised Adam and Eve that they would “be like gods” if they would but eat of the forbidden fruit. Like materialism and self-centeredness, as well as vanity, pride is a root sin that lies at the heart of considerable dysfunction in our world, a root sin to which the best and brightest and the most fortunate among us are particularly susceptible. Jesus vanquished pride, a powerful temptation, to which Adam and Eve had fallen prey.

The fact that Adam and Eve proved susceptible to these three temptations speaks to their primordial nature and hence, to our own vulnerability. Jesus willingly confronted these root sins,

acknowledging the humanity he shared with us. It speaks to our susceptibility and our need for ongoing conversion as we recommit ourselves to our fundamental identity as missionary disciples.

Pope Francis is direct in acknowledging certain sins that he perceives to be all too prevalent in the Church, all of which fit quite comfortably under the traditional umbrellas of materialism and sensuality, vanity and pride. He acknowledges, too, our need for ongoing conversion as we take on the task of missionary discipleship. More to the point, the Church's "missionary mandate...calls for ongoing formation and maturation."³³ Confronting our own failures and weaknesses can be disorienting. "See where you are centered," he tells us, "and decenter yourself. The task is to open doors and windows and move out beyond..." [This is why] I prefer the image of the pilgrim, who is one who decenters and so can transcend."³⁴

“ *Without prolonged moments...of prayerful encounter...
with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless;
we lose energy...and our fervor dies out.* ”
— Pope Francis

Pope Francis knows, too, that this kind of ongoing conversion will not be possible without time in the desert (i.e., time in prayer): **“Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties and our fervor dies out.”**³⁵ Indeed, the “lack of a deep spirituality” can produce “pessimism, fatalism and mistrust.”³⁶

Most importantly, this call to continuous conversion pertains, not just to individuals, but to the Church as a whole. Indeed, Pope Francis has encouraged “each particular Church to undertake a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform,”³⁷ hence his call for a worldwide focus on synodality (i.e.: a “particular *style* that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as **the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel**”³⁸).

Reflection:

- Are we open and committed to continual conversion?
- Are we discouraged in our efforts to “Go make disciples”?
- Are we open to best practices and to fraternal correction with respect to our efforts to evangelize the broader community?
- Are our efforts to evangelize those who are insufficiently catechized, the disaffected and the unchurched, grounded in prayer?

PRINCIPLE SEVEN

JOY SHOULD BE EVIDENT IN OUR INVITATION TO OTHERS TO ENTER INTO A PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

The Church has long known that joy draws people to Jesus. Writing in the late 2nd Century, Tertullian attributed the attractiveness of Christianity to the care Jesus' disciples showed for one another and for others: "(I)t is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another..."³⁹ Pope Francis agrees: "It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by 'attraction.'"⁴⁰ More often than not, a carping or judgmental stance, vis-à-vis the disaffected and those who are searching for something more in their lives, will turn people away from the Church and, hence, the possibility of a deep and abiding personal relationship with Jesus.

A very different approach can be found in Luke's Gospel. In chapter 1, Mary responds to God's request of her with her simple "yes," and then proceeds "in haste" to the hill country to be with her kinswoman Elizabeth. Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting is filled with great joy, indeed! "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him. He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Luke 1:46-56)

“*‘Today this scripture passage
is fulfilled in your hearing.’*”
— Luke 4:21

As noted in the Gospel reading from the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C), Jesus' public ministry begins on a similar note: "He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.' Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, 'Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21) Luke thus establishes Jesus' entire three-year ministry as one of great joy!



*(A)n evangelizer must never look like someone
who has just come back from a funeral!*



—Pope Francis

Pope Francis also knows that joy lies at the very heart of our faith. Indeed, his 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* is devoted exclusively to this defining aspect of missionary discipleship. He chides those in the Church who present a contrary visage to those who have been battered and bruised by life and those who are searching for something more: **“(A)n evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!”**⁴¹ Invoking a now celebrated turn of phrase, Pope Francis affirms that “defeatism” can all too easily turn us into “querulous and disillusioned pessimists, ‘sourpusses.’”⁴² Indeed, too many Christians live “Lent without Easter.”⁴³

Reflection:

- Do we experience our identity as missionary disciples as a great joy in our lives?
- Does our proclamation of the word and our teaching fully reflect the joy of the Gospel?
- How do we share our joy with others?
- Do we actively invite others to share the joy that is enlivened in a personal relationship with Jesus?

PRINCIPLE EIGHT

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION ARE CENTRAL TO OUR EFFORTS AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

We know that Jesus healed and expelled demons in order to restore those who were ill and those who were possessed back to their families and their communities. Jesus' encounter with the widow of Nain in Luke's Gospel poignantly illustrates this defining aspect of his ministry. He recognized that an abiding relationship shared by an only son and his mother had been shattered. Jesus was "moved with pity" as a result and so "gave the young man back to his mother." (Luke 7:13-15)

The account of the Gerasene demoniac makes this same point: "The man from whom the demons had come out begged to remain with him, but he sent him away saying, 'Return home and recount what God has done for you.'" (Luke 8:26-39) In his command to "Go home!" Jesus instructs that we should share with others what God has done in healing and restoring us.



Jesus restored those whom he encountered back to a right relationship with themselves, to right relationships with others and, through the forgiveness of their sins, to a right relationship with God. In fact, we see many such healings in Luke's Gospel, including the cure of Simon's mother-in-law, (Luke 4:38-39) the cleansing of a leper, (Luke 5:12-16) the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10) and the healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage. (Luke 8:40-56)

Jesus, it seems, associated righteousness (i.e., the restoration of right relationships) with healing, a concrete manifestation, in fact, of God's mercy. Pope Francis defines mercy as the "beating heart of the Gospel"⁴⁴ and links it directly to the task of missionary discipleship:

"(T)his is a time for mercy. The Church is showing her maternal side, her motherly face, to a humanity that is wounded. She does not wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, she looks for them on the streets."⁴⁵ He recognizes that "(s)in is more than a stain. Sin is a wound; it needs to be treated, healed."⁴⁶ Again, Pope Francis invites us to think of the Church "as a field hospital, where treatment is given above all to those who are most wounded,"⁴⁷ as a place where right relationships are restored.

Through baptism and the sacrament of reconciliation, the Church offers the pathway to forgiveness and spiritual healing. To those who have been victims of sins committed upon them, we should be a place of compassion and restoration.

Further, mercy is not something to be metered out judiciously. Jesus calls all of us to repentance and a new life as part of our response to the Good News. In addressing the depth of the mercy we are to show others, Pope Francis points to an exchange Jesus had with Peter, a man who experienced Jesus' forbearance over and over again: "(W)hen Peter asked how many times he should forgive someone, Jesus said not seven times but seventy times seven, (Matthew 18:22) or in other words, always."⁴⁸ In the end, "(t)he Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel."⁴⁹ As Pope Francis reminds us, "God forgives not with a decree but with a caress."⁵⁰

 *The Church must be a place
of mercy freely given,
where everyone can feel welcomed,
loved, forgiven and encouraged to
live the good life of the Gospel.* 
— Pope Francis

Still further, this understanding of the depth of the mercy required of us reveals an unexpected truth: the mercy we share with others is not ours. It is God's mercy. Indeed, the compassion we share with others is best understood as a participation in God's mercy. According to Pope Francis, "(m)ercy is divine and has to do more with the judgment of sin. Compassion has a more human face. It means to suffer with, to suffer together, to not remain indifferent to the pain and the suffering of others."⁵¹

This participation in God's mercy requires, first and foremost, an acceptance of our own need for mercy. According to Pope Francis, "the first and only step required to experience mercy is to acknowledge that we are in need of mercy."⁵² And it requires, as well, a sustained commitment to the healing of a world very much in need of healing. According to Pope Francis, missionary discipleship "calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life... This role, at present, calls for a profound social humility"⁵³ and a tolerance for unresolved turmoil: "The task of the reconciler (i.e., a missionary disciple who is committed to restoring right relationships) is to 'endure' the conflict, facing it head-on and by discerning see beyond the surface reasons for disagreements..."⁵⁴

This may be particularly applicable to the bitterness associated with scandal and any number of disputes, too. As Pope Francis notes, "(w)hen conflicts are not resolved but kept hidden or buried in the past, silence can lead to complicity in grave misdeeds and sins. Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict between different groups..."⁵⁵ "Jesus did not found the Church as a citadel of

purity nor as a constant parade of heroes and saints... (T)he Church can be an instrument of God's mercy because it needs that mercy."⁵⁶

Finally, Pope Francis links this need for healing, peace and reconciliation to the Sabbath: "Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world."⁵⁷

Reflection:

- Have we acknowledged our own need for healing?
- Is our engagement with the insufficiently catechized, the unchurched and seekers always and everywhere characterized by compassion?
- Are we committed to the healing of those whom we encounter? To the healing of the world?
- Do we, in fact, contribute to the healing of the world and do we invite others to this labor in the vineyard?
- Do we share the meaning of the Sabbath as a gift from God oriented to the restoration of right relationships?
- Do we invite others to experience the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass as a gift from God which renews us as his people and strengthens us by his Word and the Holy Eucharist?



PRINCIPLE NINE

AN INVITING AND WELCOMING OUTREACH IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR EFFORTS AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

Jesus abhorred judgmental attitudes and high-handed behaviors. This is abundantly clear in the Gospel read on the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C): “Stop judging,” he tells his disciples, “and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” (Luke 6:27-38) Jesus was more concerned about those who had fallen short of the community’s expectations than those who lived lives of apparent virtue, hence the twin parables of the lost sheep and the misplaced coin (Luke 15:1-10) and the story of the prodigal son, which is proclaimed on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Cycle C). (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

A positive disposition and a joyful demeanor are not enough, it seems. Each of these parables leads to action. Our behaviors toward the poorly catechized, the disaffected, the unchurched and seekers need to model Christ if we are to be true to our calling as missionary disciples. In explaining the importance of an inviting and welcoming stance with others, Pope Francis goes even further. He flips the script. Yes, we should engage others as Christ would, but even more is required of us. Indeed, Pope Francis invokes the wisdom of St. Benedict, who “ordered that all guests who knocked at the monastery door be welcomed ‘like Christ,’ with a gesture of veneration, the poor and pilgrims were to be met with ‘the greatest care and solicitude.’”⁵⁸ Further, “this demands certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and a welcome which is non-judgmental,”⁵⁹ and certain behaviors as well.

“ *The Church will have to initiate everyone...
into this ‘art of accompaniment’.* ”
— Pope Francis

According to Pope Francis, this will require many of us to adopt new skillsets as well as new attitudes. “God is never indifferent. The essence of God is mercy, which is not just seeing and being moved but responding with action.”⁶⁰ According to Pope Francis, “the Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (c.f. Ex. 3:5).”⁶¹ After all, “each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without.”⁶² This is particularly so with respect to the most vulnerable among us: “(W)e are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak. Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still ‘illiterate’ when it comes to accompanying, caring for and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed society.”⁶³

A certain boldness will be required, too. Missionary disciples who read the signs of the times and respond faithfully cannot be confined to their parish's worship space. We will need to step out of our comfort zones and accept a certain level of risk. Pope Francis is clear in this regard: **"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."** I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsession and procedures."⁶⁴ "By mixing with tax collectors and 'women of ill repute,' Jesus wrestled religion from its imprisonment in the confines of the elites, of specialized knowledge and of privileged families."⁶⁵ He further explains, "The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. I often say that in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the Church and the parishes, to go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer and where they hope."⁶⁶

"We walk together with and towards Jesus. As we encounter him more deeply, our hearts begin to change and our lives become renewed."

Our accompaniment is not aimless. **We walk together with and towards Jesus. As we encounter him more deeply, our hearts begin to change and our lives become renewed.** Jesus calls all people to a better way to live, in the forgiveness and the freedom of the love of God.

This will require great patience, too and an abiding trust in God. Again, we cannot measure "success" with respect to our efforts as the world understands the term. The same applies to our apparent "failures."

"At times," Pope Francis reminds us, "we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it."⁶⁷

Reflection:

- Are we judgmental with respect to the insufficiently catechized, the disaffected and the unchurched?
- How would they characterize our interactions with them?
- What would it mean to recognize the lives of others as bearing the image and likeness of Christ?
- Are we fully prepared to accompany others?
- Are we patient with others whom we encounter as missionary disciples?

PRINCIPLE TEN

WE SHOULD EMBRACE A SENSE OF URGENCY IN OUR WORK IN THE VINEYARD

There is an undeniable urgency in Luke's Gospel and it runs in two directions. In the Gospel reading for the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C), Jesus shares his most compelling desire, **"I have come to set the world on fire and how I wish it were already blazing."** (Luke 12:49-53) Jesus is bursting at the seams to announce the Good News of the Father's love to any and all who hear his voice. It seems there is so much to do and so little time! Again, **"(t)he harvest is abundant but the laborers are few... (A)sk the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."** (Luke 10:2)



*Jesus shares his most compelling desire,
"I have come to set the world on fire and
how I wish it were already blazing."*



— Luke 12:49-53

There is a foreboding side to this urgency as well. We know that we will be held accountable for our efforts, especially as they pertain to those among us who are spiritually vulnerable. **Souls are at stake!** The story of the now-deceased Lazarus proclaimed on the Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time (Cycle C) (Luke 16:19:31) and the "woes" recalled on the Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time (Luke 6:17, 20-26) make this clear. Jesus reserves his sharpest language for the religious leaders of his day, including both clerics and lay leaders:

"Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools! Did not the maker of the outside also make the inside? But as to what is within, give alms and behold, everything will be clean for you. Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces." (Luke 11:39-44)

Jesus' cautionary words should resonate with all of us today, as well!

A certain urgency is reflected in much of Pope Francis' writing, too. He often uses the word "crisis," which he defines as a kind of "self-forgetting."⁶⁸ The family is in crisis⁶⁹; our postmodern culture is in crisis; our politics are in crisis; the world economy is in crisis⁷⁰; the environment is in crisis and so on. Pope Francis reserves his harshest rhetoric, however, for the Church itself. His criticisms of the Church and leaders in the Church are not so much alarmist in nature, however. He is, after all, a man of great hope.

In the end, his criticisms are more impatient and regretful than apocalyptic. And this impatience and regret is born, it seems, out of his sense that the Church may not be living up to its missionary calling at this pivotal moment in time. Pope Francis knows that we, too, will be held accountable for our labor in the Father's vineyard.

Reflection:

- Are our hearts on fire to proclaim the Father's love to all?
- Do we fully appreciate the nature of the challenges that lie before us?
- Do we recognize certain opportunities that may be available to us?
- Do we fully understand what is at stake, not from our perspective, but from God's perspective? Do we understand that souls are at stake?

“ *Let us set Northwest Indiana ablaze in God’s love as we boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord!* ”

A CONCLUDING REFLECTION

In my homily during the Mass that opened our current Synod on October 17, 2021, I shared a personal reflection. I reprise it here because it was organized around an evocative image that complements, I think, the more formal analysis shared here. I recalled a visit to one of our local parishes, where I was invited to participate in a bonfire. As the parishioners assembled, I was advised that I would soon be asked to light the fire!

Now fire can be intimidating. A fire can get out of control. A fire can be dangerous. Once a fire is raging, it can be hard to contain. And yet we know that fire can be beneficial, too. In our local industries, fire is used to purify metal and to shape it.

And we know, too, that fire is featured prominently in Scripture. The appearance of fire played a prominent role at the Pentecost, of course. Tongues of fire descended upon those who had gathered in the upper room. Again, Jesus affirmed that he had come to “set the world on fire,” a startling claim to which he added: “How I wish it were already blazing!” Why? Because the fire of the Holy Spirit – that burning intensity that the Lord wants us to have in our hearts, that coming together so that the fire of God’s love can be made visible to all and a source of heat and light and strength and power – is such a powerful biblical image.

The Father sends the Holy Spirit so that we will not be alone, so that we will know the truth of God’s love and so be enabled to live out this great truth in our time. The same Holy Spirit has guided the Church over the centuries. The same Holy Spirit can be found in Scripture and in tradition and in the Magisterium, too. **The Holy Spirit is the guardian of the deposit of faith, but more than a guardian, too. The Holy Spirit impels us forward.**

When I was ordained as your bishop, I reflected on the many fires that had already been lit in the Diocese of Gary as a result of the synod that had taken place in 2017. Bishop Hying and those who assisted him listened attentively to voices from across the diocese. He “walked” with everyone who participated in this memorable event to better understand the needs of God’s people and to identify ways in which we, as Church, can attend to those needs.

That torch has been passed on to me. In my view, we should rekindle this fire and send it off in new directions as we confront the many challenges that have emerged in this unique moment in our history, including our experience of COVID-19. Indeed, we should embrace anew the title of the pastoral letter shared at the close of the diocese’s 2017 Synod, “Go Make Disciples,” as a reminder

of the missionary mandate given to all of us by Jesus. This is our job! We are to go make disciples! We are challenged in this time and place to draw others into a loving relationship with Jesus!

I know this can seem more than a bit daunting. “Me? A missionary disciple? Me? Promoting Jesus to my loved ones and to others who don't know him? How can I do that?” Yes, we can easily assemble a laundry list of reasons as to why we should shy away from the path of missionary discipleship. “I'm going to stay in my comfort zone. I'm not going to light any new fires. I'm going to stick with what I've got.”

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis argues that every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Jesus. If you have encountered the love of God in Jesus, you are a missionary. We are all encouraged to be missionaries.

Nonetheless, too few among us have embraced this calling. Some may say, “I think of myself as a follower of Jesus and that work for me, at least to some extent, but I'm not qualified or even willing to be sent out to do anything.” The truth is that in our baptism, God has prepared us to always and everywhere be missionary disciples. As followers of Jesus we must trust in the Holy Spirit and always be on mission!

“ *We have found the Messiah!* ”

Pope Francis provides us with examples. “Look at the first disciples,” the Holy Father tells us. **Look at those first disciples who – immediately after encountering the loving gaze of Jesus – went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!”** They had encountered Jesus and then told others whom they met along the way about him. The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans came to believe in him because of this woman's testimony. The same was true for St. Paul. After his encounter with Jesus, he immediately proclaimed Jesus as Lord.

Pope Francis asks: “What are we waiting for?” To be a missionary disciple is a joyful life. It is a beautiful calling. To be open to the Holy Spirit's work in our time is nothing short of a great adventure!

The time came for me to light the bonfire. “Here you go, Bishop.” And I said, “Oh, no. That's okay. You can do it.” And then I thought about it for a moment. What a powerful symbol — a bonfire — and reminder that “I have come to set the world ablaze!” I decided to light the fire and at a spot where it had all been prearranged, I lit it!

Now, truth be told, the bonfire did not get off to great start. My efforts did not set the wood — or the world — ablaze. I soon noticed, however, that there was another spot ready to be lit and, sure enough, someone took my lighter and lit it. And this little flame took off! And then it was as if you had two little fires going in the big pile of wood. And I found myself cheering for my little flame. I wanted it to find its way to the bigger fire so that we could say, “Yes, this is a great bonfire!” And it did all come together. In time, the two fires united and we did, indeed, have a great bonfire.

I do not know yet about the many little fires the Lord is going to set ablaze for us in the Diocese of Gary, but I trust that he will do so if we remain open to him. I can assure you that it will happen. And, yes, we might say, “I’ve only got a little bit of kindling. I don’t have a whole lot here with which to work.”

Be patient, however. Wait and see what the Lord will do. It is all about remaining open to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can use us and we can, in time, do more than we could ever have asked for or imagined.

“ *We can and should be an epicenter of evangelization.* ”

Together, let us attend to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that this vision – this good work begun in us – will be realized here in the Diocese of Gary. The 2020 census revealed that there are 807,703 souls living in our four counties. Not all are Catholic, of course, but all need to encounter the love of Jesus. **We can and should be an epicenter of evangelization. Why not us?**

Northwest Indiana needs to know and experience the love of Jesus now more than ever, to know there is a better way to live, a life full of hope and joy and the love of Jesus. The Lord has given us all we need to be his vessels. Strengthened by the Eucharist, renewed by all the sacraments and the Word of God, we can bring revival and renewal to individuals, families, parishes and our communities. Encouraged by the example of our Blessed Mother, the first and greatest of all disciples and a true exemplar for all missionaries, let us embrace the challenge to be both disciples and missionaries.

Let us set Northwest Indiana ablaze in God’s love as we boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord!

Jesus, I trust in you.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.



Robert J. McClory

**The Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop
Diocese of Gary**

February 2, 2022

The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

Gracious God,
Grant us the grace to be your joyful disciples and the courage
to be your bold missionaries, proclaiming by word and deed
that ***Jesus Christ is Lord!***

Amen.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 15.
- ² Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 20.
- ³ Brenden Byrne. *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2015, 61.
- ⁴ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 103-104.
- ⁵ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 151.
- ⁶ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 146.
- ⁷ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 35.
- ⁸ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 36.
- ⁹ Gerhard Lohfink. *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012, 84.
- ¹⁰ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 111.
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- ¹³ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 129-130.
- ¹⁴ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 2016, 21.
- ¹⁵ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 17.
- ¹⁶ Donald Senior. *Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1992, 7.
- ¹⁷ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 7.
- ¹⁸ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 20.
- ¹⁹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 1.
- ²⁰ Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 266.
- ²¹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 266.
- ²² Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 164.
- ²³ Second Vatican Council. "Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." In *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, edited by Austin Flannery, 163-282. Northport, NY: Costello, 2007, par. 18.
- ²⁴ Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 1997, par. 1718
- ²⁵ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 12.
- ²⁶ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 279.
- ²⁷ Pope Francis. *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2020, par. 75.
- ²⁸ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 12.
- ²⁹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par.82.

- ³⁰ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 70-71.
- ³¹ I am grateful to Deacon Dan Lowery for contributing this exegesis pertaining to Jesus' experience of the three temptations in the desert, a reflection that I have modified and adapted here, but has been published elsewhere in a modified form.
- ³² See Loyola, Ignatius. *The Spiritual Exercises*. Translated by Elder Mullan. Lexington, KY: First Rate, 2016.
- ³³ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 160.
- ³⁴ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 135.
- ³⁵ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 262.
- ³⁶ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 275.
- ³⁷ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 30.
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- ³⁹ Tertullian. "Apology," chapter XXXIX, ANF03. In *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by S. Thelwall. London, England: Catholic Way, 2014.
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- ⁴² Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 85.
- ⁴³ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 6.
- ⁴⁴ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 97.
- ⁴⁵ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 6.
- ⁴⁶ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 26.
- ⁴⁷ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 8.
- ⁴⁸ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 50.
- ⁴⁹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 114.
- ⁵⁰ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, xii.
- ⁵¹ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 91.
- ⁵² Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, X.
- ⁵³ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 239-140. See Pope Francis. *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2020, par. 284. See also Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 47.
- ⁵⁴ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 91-92.
- ⁵⁵ Pope Francis. *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2020, par. 244.
- ⁵⁶ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 72.
- ⁵⁷ Pope Francis. *On Care for Our Common Home*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2015, par. 80.
- ⁵⁸ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 102.
- ⁵⁹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 165.

- ⁶⁰ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 19.
- ⁶¹ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 85.
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- ⁶³ Pope Francis. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2018, par. 64.
- ⁶⁴ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 49.
- ⁶⁵ Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: A Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 123.
- ⁶⁶ Pope Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy*. New York, NY, Random House, 52.
- ⁶⁷ Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 46.
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- ⁶⁹ See Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, Vaticana, 2013, par. 66.
- ⁷⁰ See Pope Francis. *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020, 117.

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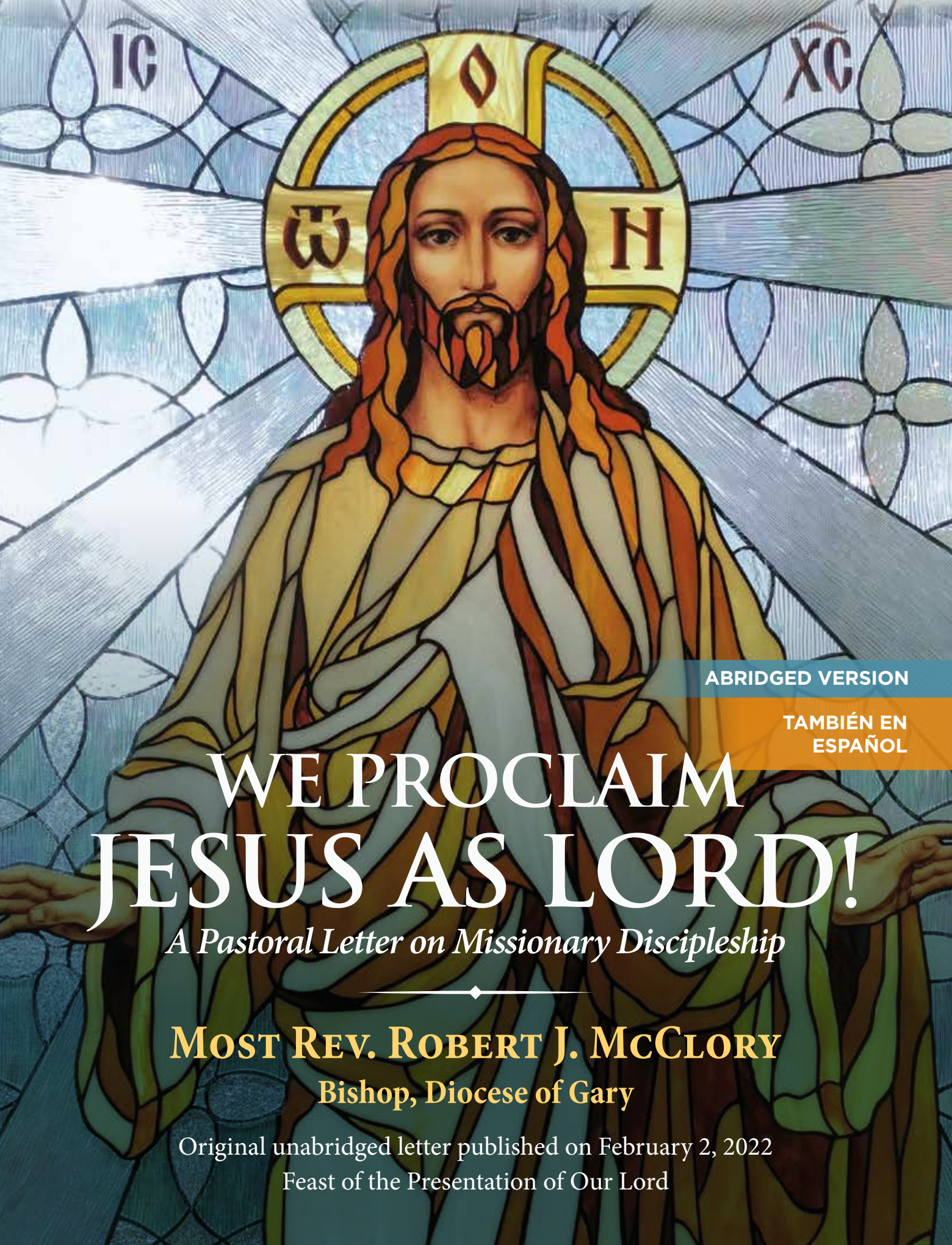


Synod 2022

our journey continues ...
nuestro viaje continua...



Diocese of Gary
dcgary.org



ABRIDGED VERSION

TAMBIÉN EN
ESPAÑOL

WE PROCLAIM JESUS AS LORD!

A Pastoral Letter on Missionary Discipleship

MOST REV. ROBERT J. MCCLORY

Bishop, Diocese of Gary

Original unabridged letter published on February 2, 2022

Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord



¡PROCLAMAMOS A JESÚS COMO EL SEÑOR

Carta pastoral sobre el Discipulado Misionero

MOST REV. ROBERT J. MCCLORY
Obispo, Diocese of Gary

Carta original integra publicada el 2 de febrero de 2022
Fiesta de la Presentación de Nuestro Señor

ABRIDGED
VERSION

Editor's note: On February 2, 2022, Most Reverend Robert J. McClory released his first pastoral letter "We Proclaim Jesus as Lord!" which is available for reading in its entirety on the diocesan website. *El 2 de febrero de 2022, el Reverendísimo Robert J. McClory publicó su primera carta pastoral "¡Proclamamos a Jesús como Señor!" que está disponible para su lectura en su totalidad en el sitio web diocesano.*

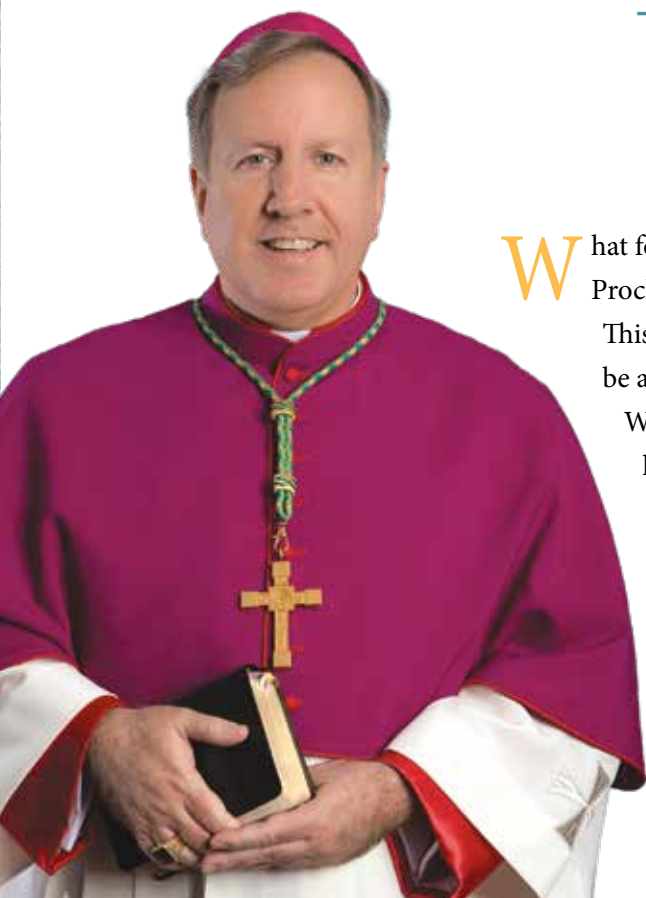


BISHOP'S GREETING

We proclaim Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

(Bishop McClory's episcopal motto, comes from this Scripture.)

— 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5



What follows is an abridged version of my pastoral letter entitled “We Proclaim Jesus as Lord” with revised discussion questions.

This letter reflects on missionary discipleship: What does it mean to be a disciple and a missionary? How can we proclaim Jesus as Lord?

What does it mean to be an outward focused Church serving a hurting world? The abridged letter offers a condensed view of the full letter which is available on our diocesan website (dcgary.org) or by contacting the diocesan pastoral center.

The questions and themes included were part of synod discussions which began in 2021 at the prompting of Pope Francis, who invited all the world to have local synods on the topic of synodality, our way of “walking with” each other and being Church at this pivotal moment in time.

ESPAÑOL

Proclamamos a Jesús como El Señor y nosotros no somos más que servidores de ustedes por amor a Jesús.

— 2 Corintios 4:5

Lo que sigue es una versión abreviada de mi carta pastoral titulada “Proclamamos a Jesús como Señor” con preguntas de discusión revisadas.

Esta carta pastoral pretende ser una amplia reflexión sobre el discipulado misionero: ¿Qué significa ser discípulo y misionero? ¿Cómo podemos proclamar a Jesús como Señor? ¿Qué significa ser una Iglesia orientada hacia el exterior que sirve a un mundo que sufre? La carta abreviada ofrece una visión condensada de la carta completa que está disponible en nuestra página web diocesana (dcgary.org) o poniéndose en contacto con el centro pastoral diocesano.

Estas preguntas y temas surgieron como parte prominente de nuestras discusiones sinodales iniciadas en 2021 a petición del Papa Francisco, quien invitó a todas las diócesis del mundo a entrar en un proceso sinodal sobre el tema de la sinodalidad, nuestra manera de ser Iglesia en este momento crucial.

Nuestra reciente experiencia sinodal es también un esfuerzo por renovar el extraordinario don del Sínodo 2017 bajo

This synod experience also refreshes the extraordinary gift of Synod 2017 under the leadership of my predecessor, Bishop Donald J. Hying, who in his pastoral letter re-enforced the Great Commission to “go make disciples.” (Matthew 28:19-20) To accept the charge to “go make disciples” is another way of saying that we are called to be missionary disciples. The one who sends us out is Jesus himself.

With the release of my pastoral letter in February, our parish pastors and administrators have been asked to identify and form parish leaders to reflect on the pastoral letter and answer questions which will lead to parish plans to advance our efforts to be a church of missionary disciples.

It is important that all of us ground our efforts in an abiding trust in Jesus since the work of sharing the Good News is a life-long endeavor. I hope the reflections highlighted here, and contained fully in my pastoral letter, will provide a common reference as together we undertake the work that lies before us as we seek to rediscover our identity as both disciples and missionaries.



el liderazgo de mi predecesor, el obispo Donald J. Hying, que culminó con su carta pastoral reforzando la Gran Comisión de “ir y hacer discípulos.” (Mateo 28:19-20) Aceptar el encargo de “ir y hacer discípulos” es otra forma de decir que estamos llamados a ser discípulos misioneros. El que nos envía es el propio Jesús.

Con la publicación de mi carta pastoral en febrero, se ha pedido a nuestros párrocos y administradores que identifiquen y formen a los líderes parroquiales para que reflexionen sobre la carta

pastoral y respondan a las preguntas que conducirán a los planes parroquiales para avanzar en nuestros esfuerzos por ser una iglesia de discípulos misioneros.

Es importante que todos nosotros basemos nuestros esfuerzos en una confianza permanente en Jesús, ya que la labor de compartir la Buena Nueva es un esfuerzo que dura toda la vida. Espero que las reflexiones que aquí se destacan, y que se recogen íntegramente en mi carta pastoral, nos sirvan de referencia común a la hora de emprender

juntos el trabajo que tenemos por delante mientras tratamos de redescubrir nuestra identidad como discípulos y misioneros.

Disciples & Missionaries

A missionary is not a particular kind of disciple. To be a disciple is to be a missionary, a truth revealed in Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom — the Good News of Jesus. We cannot separate Jesus' Proclamation of the Good News from his person. **Jesus is the Good News!**

Disciples & Missionaries

All four Gospels echo this core message: the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel! Extraordinary acts of mercy were coupled with Jesus' proclamation of the Good News — acts of healing and the forgiveness of sins.

In Jesus, the power of God was projected into the world with a new intimacy. In proclaiming the Good News, Jesus affirmed that what generations had prayed for, waited for, hoped for and longed for — was him. In Jesus, everything changed! Those who heard his voice were no longer limited to hoping for peace, comfort, consolation, healing and freedom — because these desires are now realized in his person. Jesus is Emmanuel, God is with us.

Jesus' mission did not end with the Proclamation of the Kingdom. He invited his followers into a deep

and abiding relationship with him. He embraced them as aspiring disciples and he challenged them to be missionaries as well. Jesus proclaimed the Good News and then shared his saving mission with his disciples, encouraging them to do the same. We, too, are encouraged to respond to the invitation of Jesus; to be transformed by his presence in our lives and his example. **Having encountered Christ, we long to experience his love ever more deeply. We recognize Jesus as so much more than a friend, wisdom**



Discípulos Y Misioneros

El misionero no es un tipo particular de discípulo. Ser un discípulo es ser un misionero, una verdad revelada en la Proclamación del Reino de Jesús - la Buena Nueva de Jesús.

No podemos separar la Proclamación de la Buena Noticia de Jesús de su persona. Jesús es la Buena Noticia. Los cuatro Evangelios se hacen eco de este mensaje central: el Reino de Dios está cerca. ¡Arrepiéntanse y crean en el Evangelio! La proclamación de la Buena Noticia por parte de Jesús iba

acompañada de actos extraordinarios de misericordia: actos de curación y de perdón de los pecados.

En Jesús, el poder de Dios se proyectó en el mundo con una nueva intimidad. Al proclamar la Buena Nueva, Jesús afirmó que lo que generación tras generación había rezado, esperado, anhelado y deseado era él. En Jesús, todo cambió. Los que escuchaban su voz ya no se limitaban a esperar la paz, el consuelo, la consolación, la curación y la libertad. Estos deseos humanos se realizan ahora en su persona. Jesús es el Emmanuel, Dios está con nosotros.

La misión de Jesús no terminó con la Proclamación del Reino. Invitó a sus seguidores a una relación profunda y duradera con él. Los abrazó como aspirantes a discípulos y los exhortó a ser también misioneros. Jesús proclamó la Buena Nueva y luego compartió su misión salvadora con sus discípulos, animándolos a hacer lo mismo. También nosotros estamos invitados a escuchar la voz del Maestro. También nosotros podemos ser transformados por su presencia y su ejemplo en nuestras vidas. Habiendo encontrado a Cristo, anhelamos experimentar su amor cada vez más profun-

figure or folk hero. He is our Savior, our hope and our destiny; and we are challenged each day to imitate him and so participate in his ongoing work in the world.



We are called to be fully active in our discipleship and this means that we must be missionaries, too. This is the great challenge of our time. Jesus does not call some of us to be disciples and others to be missionaries. To be a disciple of Jesus, one must embrace the missionary calling, too. Unfortunately, few of us feel prepared to embrace our missionary responsibility. Yet as disciples, we must realize that the Good News cannot be kept exclusively for our benefit. The truth about Jesus and his promise of salvation should be shared with everyone! It must be shared and not just with those who look like us, act like us, or sound like us — but with everyone.

Missionary activity comes in all shapes and sizes. For many of us, our response to the missionary impulse will emerge over time as we ponder a question that applies to all aspiring disciples: “How am I being called to share Jesus, to serve others?” This question applies to all of us, including the homebound whose missionary work may be focused solely — and beautifully — on prayer.

Matthew’s Gospel explains the two-fold nature of missionary discipleship: “Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, he was teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel

damente. Reconocemos a Jesús como mucho más que un amigo, una figura de sabiduría o un héroe popular. Él es nuestro Salvador, nuestra esperanza y nuestro destino; y nos desafía cada día a imitarlo y a participar así en su obra permanente en el mundo.

Estamos llamados a ser plenamente activos en nuestro discipulado y esto significa que debemos ser también misioneros. Este es el gran reto de nuestro tiempo. Jesús no llama a algunos de nosotros a ser discípulos y a otros a ser misioneros. Para ser discípulo de Jesús, hay que abrazar también la vocación misionera. Lamentablemente, pocos de nosotros nos sentimos preparados para

asumir la responsabilidad misionera que es fundamental para el discipulado. Sin embargo, como discípulos, nos damos cuenta de que la Buena Nueva no puede ser contenida. La verdad sobre Jesús y su promesa de salvación debe ser compartida con todos. Debe ser compartida y no sólo con los que se parecen a nosotros, actúan como nosotros o suenan como nosotros y no sólo con alguien de nuestra propia clase socioeconómica o comunidad religiosa y no sólo con alguien con quien solemos estar de acuerdo, sino con todo el mundo.

La actividad misionera tiene muchas formas y modelos. A muy pocos de nosotros se nos pedirá que nos paremos en una esquina para dar

testimonio del amor de Dios, aunque algunos en nuestra diócesis están comprometidos con este tipo de evangelización. Para la mayoría de nosotros, nuestra respuesta individual al impulso misionero surgirá con el tiempo al reflexionar sobre una pregunta que se aplica a todos los aspirantes a discípulos: “¿Cómo estoy llamado a compartir a Jesús, a servir a los demás?”. Esta pregunta se aplica a todos nosotros, incluso a los que están en casa, cuya labor misionera puede estar centrada únicamente -y maravillosamente- en la oración.

El Evangelio de Mateo explica la doble naturaleza del discipulado misionero: “Jesús recorría todas las ciudades y aldeas, enseñaba en

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing gold-rimmed glasses and a gold hoop earring. She is looking upwards and to the right. She is holding a large cross made of green and yellow ribbons. In the background, a man with glasses and a grey jacket is visible, looking down. The background is a light-colored stone wall.

Sharing
the Good
News does
not require
perfection.

of the kingdom and curing every disease and illness.” (Matthew 9:35) Jesus was preaching and healing, calling others to repentance and inviting them ever more deeply into the Kingdom of God. Matthew goes on: “At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them,” (Matthew 9:36) because they were troubled and alone.

The crowds needed a shepherd. They needed Jesus. Jesus was then and remains the Good Shepherd. And like Jesus, we cannot leave those whom we encounter troubled or alone. We need to share the Good Shepherd and proclaim the Kingdom in our time. We certainly should have a personal relationship with Jesus, yet we must also be a missionary.

Pope Francis uses the image of a field hospital in making this point. A field

hospital is pitched among the wounded. Sometimes, immediate, life-sustaining care must be provided in a makeshift facility. We can trust that we have the treatment that is so desperately needed by those among us who are troubled and by those among us who have been abandoned. We can bind these spiritual



wounds, because we have Jesus and because we are compelled as disciples of Jesus to share the Good News, to

las sinagogas y predicaba el Evangelio del Reino y curaba toda enfermedad y dolencia”. (Mateo 9:35) Jesús predicaba y curaba, llamando a otros al arrepentimiento e invitándolos cada vez más profundamente al Reino de Dios. Mateo continúa: “Al ver a las multitudes, su corazón se compadecía de ellas” (Mateo 9:36), porque estaban atribuladas y solas.

Las multitudes necesitaban un pastor. Necesitaban a Jesús y Jesús no los defraudó. No los dejó solos ni preocupados. Él era entonces y sigue siendo el Buen Pastor. Y por eso, no podemos dejar a los que se encuentran preocupados o solos, y mucho menos si somos verdaderos seguidores de Cristo.

Tenemos la respuesta, el remedio, el ministerio y la misión necesarios para proclamar el Reino en nuestro tiempo. Esta respuesta, este remedio, este ministerio y esta misión deben ser compartidos ahora, tanto cerca como lejos. Ciertamente debemos tener una relación personal con Jesús, pero también debemos ser misioneros.

El Papa Francisco utiliza la imagen de un hospital de campaña para explicar este punto. Un hospital de campaña se instala entre los heridos. A veces, hay que proporcionar cuidados inmediatos y vitales en una instalación improvisada. Podemos confiar en que tenemos el tratamiento que tanto necesitan los que están atribulados entre nosotros y

los que han sido abandonados. Podemos curar estas heridas espirituales, no porque seamos especiales o estemos dotados de forma única, sino porque tenemos a Jesús y porque estamos obligados, como discípulos de Jesús, a compartir la Buena Nueva, a llevar la curación y la reconciliación cuando y donde estemos.

El Evangelio de Mateo continúa identificando un obstáculo principal para el trabajo continuo de Jesús en el mundo: “(L)a mies es abundante, pero los obreros son pocos, así que pidan al dueño de la mies que envíe obreros para su cosecha”. (Mateo 9:37) De nuevo, este es un reto principal de nuestro tiempo. Estamos llamados a ser discípulos

bring healing and reconciliation when and where we are.

Matthew's Gospel goes on to identify a chief obstacle to Jesus' ongoing work in the world: "(T)he harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few, so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." (Matthew 9:37) This is a principal challenge of our time. We are called to be missionary disciples who are willing to join the Master's harvest.

Our world needs disciples who are willing to tend to the needs of all — both the baptized and unbaptized. Our world needs disciples who will share the Good News, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, Son of the Father, whose love and mercy are available to everyone. Let us boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord and bravely bring healing to others.

We may be "wounded healers," but that is okay. **Sharing the Good News**

does not require perfection. Indeed, the Good News we proclaim is God's Good News, not our own. We are simply asked to share it with the world. The healing we effect is God's gift. We are privileged to share it as best we can. And the reconciliation we hope to bring is God's peace and God's hope for all of us. We are the voice, the hands and the feet of the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27) As St. Paul put it, we are challenged to put on the "mind of Christ." (Philippians 2:5) It is Jesus who continues to act in the world in and through us.

We are indeed called at this moment in time to serve in a world that is very much in need of disciples and very much in need of missionaries, too. **The call to fulfill the Great Commission was not reserved to "good times" or to favorable conditions.** Much has happened since I was ordained your bishop. Perhaps most obviously, the

misioneros que estén dispuestos a unirse a la mies del Maestro.

Nuestro mundo necesita discípulos que estén dispuestos a atender las necesidades de todos, tanto de los bautizados como de los no bautizados. Nuestro mundo necesita discípulos que compartan la Buena Nueva, proclamando a Jesús como Señor, Hijo del Padre, cuyo amor y misericordia están disponibles para todos. Proclamemos con valentía a Jesús como Señor. Llevemos con valentía la sanación cuando y donde podamos.

Puede que seamos "sanadores heridos", pero eso está bien.. Compartir la Buena

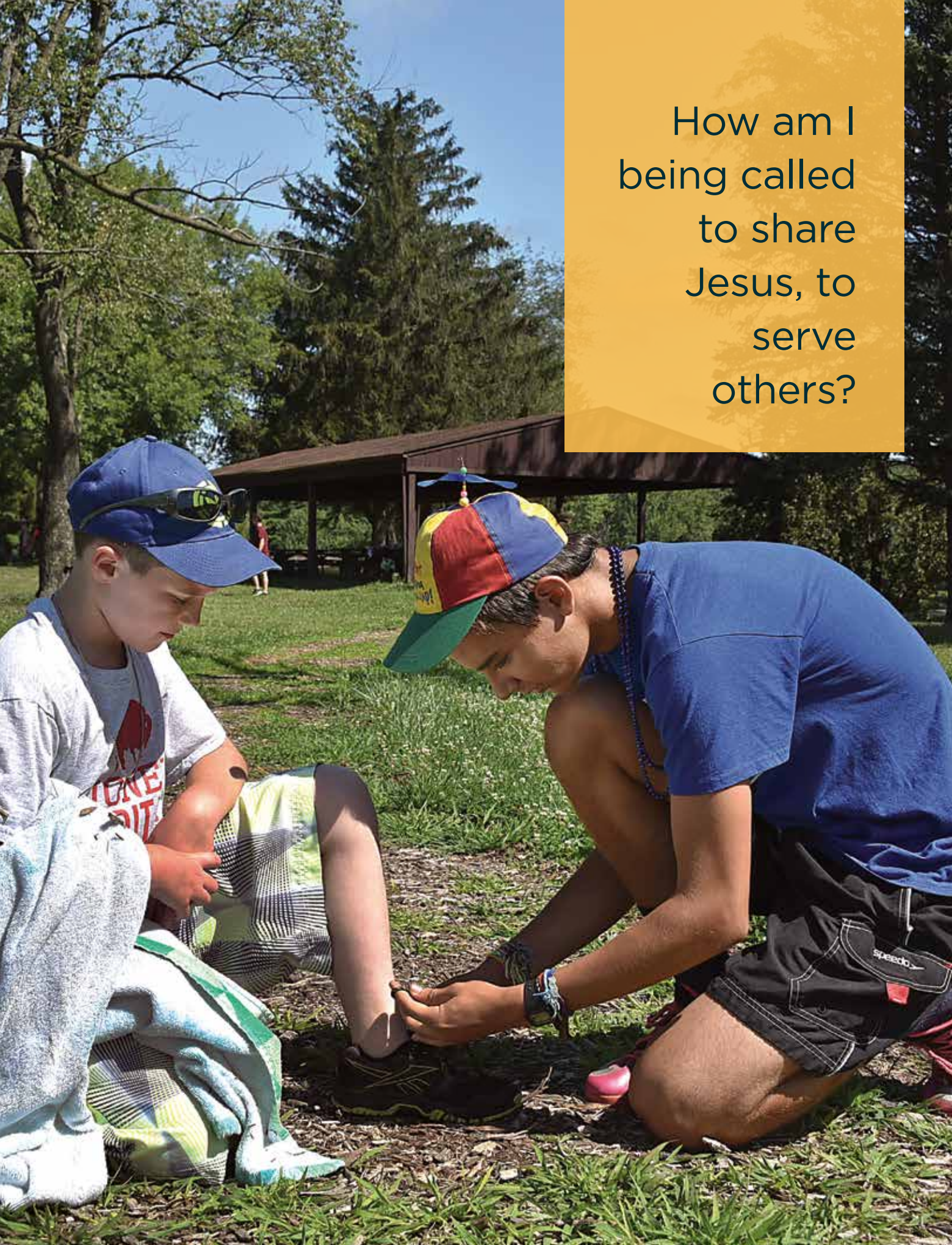
Nueva no requiere perfección. De hecho, la Buena Nueva que proclamamos es la de Dios, no la nuestra. Simplemente se nos pide que la manifestemos en el mundo. La sanación que realizamos es un don de Dios. Tenemos el privilegio de compartirla lo mejor que podamos. Y la reconciliación que esperamos engendrar en y entre los que encontramos es la paz de Dios y la esperanza de Dios para todos nosotros. Somos la voz, las manos y los pies del Cuerpo de Cristo. (1 Corintios 12:27) Como dijo San Pablo, tenemos el reto de revestirnos de la "mente de Cristo". (Filipenses 2:5) Es Jesús quien sigue actuando en el mundo en y a

través de nosotros.

En efecto, estamos llamados en este momento a servir en un mundo que está muy necesitado de discípulos y también de misioneros. La llamada a cumplir con la Gran Misión no está reservada a los "buenos tiempos" o a las condiciones favorables. Han sucedido muchas cosas en los 24 meses transcurridos desde que fui ordenado como su obispo. Quizá lo más evidente sea que la pandemia de COVID-19 que nos ha afectado a todos, provocando mucho sufrimiento e intensificando el aislamiento y el malestar social.

Otros desafíos también han revelado

How am I
being called
to share
Jesus, to
serve
others?



COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us, bringing much suffering and intensifying isolation and social unrest.

Other challenges have also revealed disconcerting trends of a longer-term nature. We know, for instance, that membership in our parishes is down and so, too, participation in Sunday worship and the sacraments. This is true, not just in the Diocese of Gary, but in the nation as a whole. Indeed, we could be disheartened or even divided by these “signs of the times.”

As believers, we are called to bring hope and healing. Jesus has not abandoned us in this task. We are not alone. Pope Francis affirmed this in his book *Let Us Dream*, in which



he says, “I’m never hopeless. We are accompanied.... I take hope from the last words of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel: ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age.’ (Matthew 28:20).” I, too, take great hope that Jesus is with us as we respond to his command to be missionary disciples.

Yes, we proclaim Jesus as Lord!

tendencias desconcertantes de carácter más a largo plazo. Sabemos, por ejemplo, que el número de miembros de nuestras parroquias ha disminuido, así como la participación en la misa dominical y en los sacramentos. Esto es cierto, no sólo en la Diócesis de Gary, sino en toda la nación. De hecho, todos podríamos desanimarnos o incluso dividirnos por estos “signos de los tiempos”.

Como creyentes, estamos llamados a llevar esperanza y sanación. *Jesús no nos ha abandonado en esta tarea. No estamos solos. El Papa Francisco ha reafirmado este artículo de fe. “Nunca estoy desesperado”, insiste. “Estamos*

acompañados.” Más aún, “tomo la esperanza de las últimas palabras de Jesús en el Evangelio de Mateo: ‘Yo estoy con ustedes todos los días, hasta el fin del mundo’. (Mateo 28:20).” Yo también tengo la gran esperanza de que Jesús está con nosotros cuando respondemos a su mandato de ser discípulos misioneros.

¡Sí, proclamamos a Jesús como Señor!

Ten Principles of Missionary Discipleship

To whom should we look for guidance as disciples walking together during this season of prayer, conversation, and invitation? **We look to Jesus** as revealed in the Gospels.

We look, as well, to Pope Francis, who has built upon the work of his predecessors Saint Paul VI, Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI in producing a substantial body of work on the nature of missionary discipleship, most notably in *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel.

We are particularly blessed that in 2022 the Church will focus on the Gospel of Luke. The descriptions in Luke's Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles apply to the challenges we face today with respect to the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)



Diez Principios Del Discipulado Misionero

A ¿A quién debemos mirar para que nos guíe como discípulos que caminan juntos durante este tiempo de oración, conversación e invitación? Miramos a Jesús tal y como se revela en los Evangelios. También miramos al Papa Francisco, que se ha basado en el trabajo de sus predecesores

San Pablo VI, San Juan Pablo II y el Papa Benedicto XVI para producir un cuerpo sustancial de trabajo sobre la naturaleza del discipulado misionero, más notablemente en *Evangelii Gaudium*, La alegría del Evangelio.

Nos sentimos especialmente bendecidos por el hecho de que en 2022 la Iglesia se centrará en el Evangelio de Lucas durante el año. Las descripciones del Evangelio de Lucas y de los Hechos de los Apóstoles se aplican a los re-

tos a los que nos enfrentamos hoy en día con respecto a la Gran Comisión de "id y haced discípulos a todas las naciones, bautizándolas en el nombre del Padre y del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, enseñándoles a cumplir todo lo que os he mandado". (Mateo 28:19-20)

The Ten Principles – An Overview

We can discern ten distinct principles pertaining to missionary discipleship within the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles: *Podemos discernir diez principios distintos relativos al discipulado misionero dentro del Evangelio de Lucas y los Hechos de los Apóstoles:*



- 1. We proclaim Jesus as Lord**
Proclamamos a Jesús como Señor.



- 2. We are all called to be missionary disciples.**
Todos estamos llamados a ser discípulos misioneros.



- 3. We invite others into a personal encounter with Jesus.**
Invitamos a otros a un encuentro personal con Jesús.



- 4. This is God's work, not our own.**
Esta es la obra de Dios, no la nuestra.



- 5. Prayer and hard work are required of us, nonetheless.**
Sin embargo, se requiere de nosotros oración y trabajo duro.



- 6. Our efforts as missionary disciples will require our own ongoing conversion.** *Nuestros esfuerzos como discípulos misioneros requerirán nuestra propia conversión permanente.*



- 7. Joy should be evident in our invitation to others to enter into a personal encounter with Jesus.** *La sanación y la reconciliación son fundamentales para nuestros esfuerzos.*



- 8. Healing and reconciliation are central to our efforts.**
La sanación y la reconciliación son fundamentales para nuestros esfuerzos,



- 9. An inviting and welcoming outreach is essential to our efforts.** *Un alcance atractivo y acogedor es esencial para nuestros esfuerzos.*



- 10. We should embrace a sense of urgency in this work.**
Debemos adoptar un sentido de urgencia en nuestro trabajo en la viña.

— PRINCIPLE ONE —

We proclaim Jesus as Lord.

— 2 Corinthians 4:5



The Gospels reveal Jesus as more than a wise man, more than a teacher, more than a healer and more than a Jewish prophet. In fact, the Gospels affirm Jesus as the Son of God who was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, who suffered, died and was buried, only to rise again from the dead.

The Church does not shy away from these truths. Pope Francis states in his book *Let us Dream*, **“The firm center of Christianity is the essential proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It means that God loved me and gave himself up for me. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His love on the cross, are what calls us to be missionary disciples.”**

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis encourages all missionary disciples to concentrate on the “essentials of the faith...(W)hat shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead.”

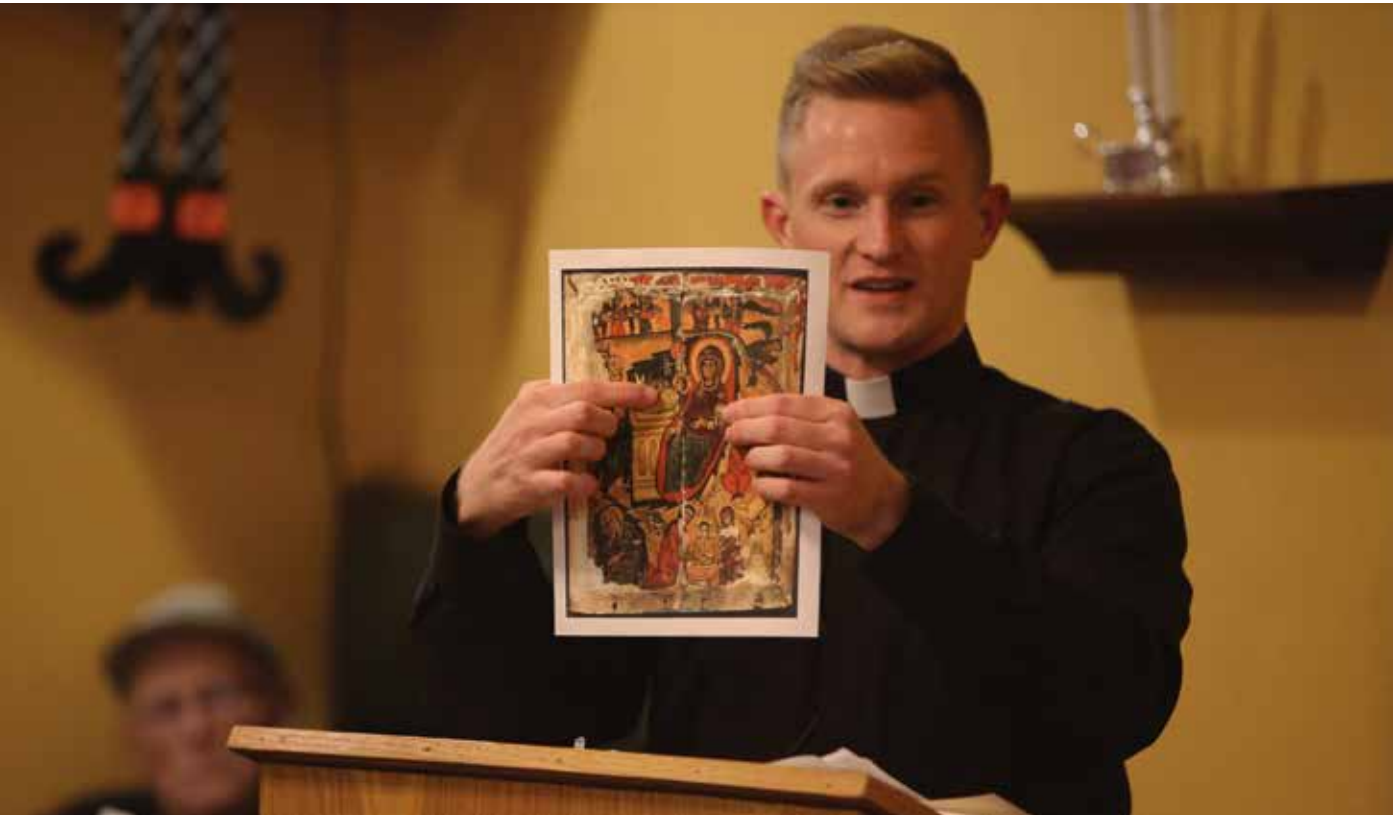
PRIMER PRINCIPIO
Proclamamos a Jesús
Como El Señor
— 2 Corintios 4:5

El Evangelio de Lucas revela que Jesús es más que un sabio, más que un maestro, más que un sanador y más que un profeta judío. De hecho, es mucho más. La Tradición Apostólica, basándose en los Evangelios, afirma que Jesús es el Hijo de Dios que se encarnó de

la Virgen María. Se revela como el Hijo de Dios que sufrió, murió y fue sepultado, para luego resucitar de entre los muertos.

La Iglesia no rehúye estas verdades. El Papa Francisco es claro en su libro Déjenos soñar, “El centro firme del cristianismo es el anuncio esencial de la Buena Nueva de Jesucristo. Significa que Dios me amó y se entregó por mí. La muerte y la resurrección de Jesucristo, su amor en la cruz, son lo que nos llama a ser discípulos misioneros.”

En La alegría del Evangelio, el Papa Francisco anima a todos los discípulos misioneros a concentrarse en lo “esencial de la fe... Lo que brilla es la belleza del amor salvador de Dios manifestado en Jesucristo muerto y resucitado”.



REFLECTION

- **How do I include the truths of the faith when I share my own journey of discipleship with others?** *¿Cómo incluyo/ incluimos las verdades de la fe cuando compartimos nuestro/mi propio camino de discipulado con otros?*
- **Does my discipleship story invite a response on the part of the listener to accept the Good News of Jesus Christ and share with others?** *¿Nuestra/mi historia de discipulado invita a una respuesta por parte del oyente para compartir las Buenas Noticias de Jesucristo con otros?*

The firm center of Christianity is the essential proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

— PRINCIPLE TWO —

We are all called to be missionary disciples.



In our baptism, we have been anointed to continue the work of Jesus in our journey. We are to do as he did. During his public ministry, Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, he healed, and he confronted evil. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke's account reveals that this is exactly what the disciples do. They carry on Jesus' mission. And this applies to us, too. It is not optional — it is what it means to be a missionary disciple.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis has affirmed this understanding of missionary discipleship: “Evangelization is the task of the Church.” All Christians are called to participate in this essential work: **“In virtue of their baptism, all members of the People of God have become missionary disciples.”**

Pope Francis explains further that the new evangelization must be “carried out in three principal settings. In the first place, we can mention the area of **ordinary pastoral ministry ...** A second area is that of the **baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism**, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith... Lastly, we cannot forget that

SEGUNDO PRINCIPIO

Todos Estamos Llamados A Ser Discípulos Misioneros

n nuestro bautismo, hemos sido ungidos para continuar la obra de Jesús en nuestro camino. Debemos hacer lo que él hizo. Durante su ministerio público, Jesús proclamó el reino de Dios, curó y se enfrentó al mal. En los Hechos de los Apóstoles, el relato de Lucas revela que esto es exactamente lo que hacen

los discípulos. Llevan a cabo la misión de Jesús. Y esto se aplica también a nosotros. No es opcional, es lo que significa ser un discípulo misionero.

En Alegría del Evangelio, El Papa Francisco ha afirmado esta comprensión del discipulado misionero: “La evangelización es la tarea de la Iglesia. Todos los cristianos están llamados a participar en esta obra esencial: “En virtud de su bautismo, todos los miembros del Pueblo de Dios se han convertido en discípulos misioneros...”

El Papa Francisco explica además que la nueva evangelización debe “llevarse a cabo en tres ámbitos principales. En primer lugar, podemos mencionar el ámbito de la pastoral ordinaria... Un segundo ámbito es el de los bautizados cuya vida no refleja las exigencias del Bautismo, que carecen de una relación significativa con la Iglesia y que ya no experimentan la consolación que nace de la fe... Por último, no podemos olvidar que la evangelización consiste, ante todo, en predicar el Evangelio

evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel **to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him.**"

Pope Francis is aware of the anxiety that may accompany this understanding of missionary discipleship. In his book, *The Name of God is Mercy*, Pope Francis affirms that "Fear of the mission can be a sign of the Holy Spirit. We feel, at once, both inadequate to the task and called to it." He assures us that great learning is not required. People respond to authentic witness more than to learned discourse. He further asserts that, "People are looking for someone to listen to them. Someone willing to grant them time, to listen to their dramas and difficulties. This is what I call the 'apostolate of the ear,' and it is important. Very important."

REFLECTION

- **Do I recognize that missionary discipleship means, as a disciple of Jesus, I am expected to share my faith with others? How do I do this?** *¿Reconozco que el discipulado misionero significa que, como discípulo de Jesús, se espera que comparta mi fe con los demás? ¿Cómo hago esto?*
- **How do I share the Word of God? How do my words and deeds reflect my Christian witness to God's Word?** *¿Cómo proclamo (comparto) la Palabra de Dios? ¿Cómo reflejan mis palabras y hechos mi testimonio cristiano de la Palabra de Dios?*
- **How can I welcome and invite the baptized, the fallen away and unbelievers?** *¿Cómo puedo acoger e invitar a los bautizados, a los caídos ya los incrédulos?*

a aquellos que no conocen a Jesucristo o que siempre lo han rechazado."

El Papa Francisco es consciente de la ansiedad que puede generar en algunos esta forma de entender el discipulado misionero. En su libro El nombre de Dios es misericordia, el Papa Francisco afirma que "la ansiedad de la misión puede ser un signo del Espíritu Santo. Nos sentimos, a la vez, inadecuados para la tarea y llamados a ella." El Asegura que no es necesario un gran aprendizaje. La gente responde más al testimonio auténtico que al discurso aprendido". Además, afirma que "la gente busca a alguien que le escuche. Alguien dispuesto a concederles tiempo, a escuchar sus dramas y dificultades. Esto es lo que yo llamo el 'apostolado del oído', y es importante. Muy importante".



— PRINCIPLE THREE —

We invite others to a personal encounter with Jesus.



It is not enough to distill the person of Jesus into a static set of dogmatic statements. We must genuinely know Jesus. Pope Francis quotes Pope Benedict XVI in *The Joy of the Gospel*, to make this point: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”

Jesus confronts Peter with the question all Christians must face at one time or another: “Who do you say that I am?” Peter responds: “The Christ of God.” (Luke 9:18-24) Christian discipleship requires more than a casual commitment or acknowledgement. It requires a personal relationship that is all-encompassing and gives direction and meaning to life.

Pope Francis in book, *The Joy of the Gospel* invites **“all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ**, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them ... Because with Jesus, life becomes “richer” and with him it is “easier to find meaning in everything.”

Pope Francis asserts that **“A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks with him, breaths with him, works with him...”** A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody...

TERCER PRINCIPIO

Invitamos a otros a un encuentro personal con Jesús

o es suficiente destilar la persona de Jesús en un conjunto estático de declaraciones dogmáticas. Debemos conocer a Jesús de verdad. El Papa Francisco cita al Papa Benedicto XVI en *La alegría del Evangelio*, para señalar este

punto: “Ser cristiano no es el resultado de una opción ética o de una idea elevada, sino el encuentro con un acontecimiento, con una persona, que da a la vida un nuevo horizonte y una orientación decisiva.”

Jesús confronta a Pedro con la pregunta que todos los cristianos deben afrontar en un momento u otro: “¿Quién dices que soy yo?”. Pedro responde: “El Cristo de Dios”. (Lucas 9:18-24 El discípulo cristiano requiere algo

más que un asentimiento intelectual. Requiere una relación personal que lo abarque todo y dé dirección y sentido a la vida.

El Papa Francisco, en su libro “*La alegría del Evangelio*”, invita “a todos los cristianos, en todas partes, en este mismo momento, a un renovado encuentro personal con Jesucristo, o al menos a una apertura para dejarse encontrar por él ... Porque con Jesús, la vida se vuelve “más rica”

Our words must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten [and] strengthen you.’”

It is helpful to think of encountering Jesus and conversion as a lifelong process. First, we bring people to encounter Jesus. Then they respond to his love, growing as his disciples. Finally, transformed by his love, they share the power of his love and mercy with others. Evangelization should be part of the ordinary life of every Christian; sharing Jesus with those who have forgotten about him or who may have never heard the message of the Gospel.

REFLECTION

- **In sharing the Good News, do I stress abstract truths over the need for a personal relationship with Jesus?**
Al compartir la Buena Nueva, ¿hago referencia a verdades abstractas por encima de la necesidad de una relación personal con Jesús?
- **Do I hunger for a personal relationship with Jesus? How has my personal relationship with Jesus grown or changed over time? ¿Tengo hambre de una relación personal con Jesús? ¿Cómo ha crecido o cambiado mi relación personal con Jesús a lo largo del tiempo?**
- **Am I attending Sunday Mass and receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and encountering him in the sacrament of reconciliation? ¿Asisto a la misa dominical y recibo a Jesús en la Santa Eucaristía y me encuentro con él en el sacramento de la reconciliación?**
- **How can I participate in or invite others to use parish programs to learn more and grow into a deeper relationship with Jesus? ¿Cómo puedo participar o invitar a otros a utilizar los programas parroquiales para aprender más y crecer en una relación más profunda con Jesús?**
- **How can I reach out to lapsed Catholics and the “unchurched” to invite them, too, into an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus? ¿Cómo puedo acercarme a los católicos no practicantes y a los “que no tienen iglesia” para invitarlos también a una relación cada vez más profunda con Jesús? ¿Cómo puedo acercarme a los católicos no practicantes y a los “no practicantes” para invitarlos también a una relación cada vez más profunda con Jesús?**

y con él es “más fácil encontrar el sentido de todo.”

El Papa Francisco afirma que “Un verdadero misionero, que no deja de ser discípulo, sabe que Jesús camina con él, habla con él, respira con él, trabaja con él... Una persona que no está convencida, entusiasmada, segura y enamorada, no convencerá a nadie.” En efecto, “(e)n los labios del catequista debe resonar una y otra

vez el primer anuncio: ‘Jesucristo te ama; dio su vida para salvarte; y ahora vive a tu lado cada día para iluminarte [y] fortalecerte’”

Es útil pensar en el encuentro con Jesús y en la conversión como un proceso que dura toda la vida. En primer lugar, queremos llevar a las personas a un encuentro con Jesús. Después, los animamos a responder a ese amor y a crecer cada día como discípulos suyos. Por último, los que son transformados

por su amor están llamados a dar testimonio del poder de su misericordia a los demás. La evangelización y el discipulado deben formar parte de la vida ordinaria de cada cristiano, ya que compartimos lo que hemos encontrado con aquellos que se han olvidado de él o que quizá nunca han escuchado el mensaje del Evangelio.

— PRINCIPLE FOUR —

This is God's work, not our own.



We should not assume that our efforts to evangelize the world or even our own family members and friends depends on us. Missionary discipleship is God's work. Jesus reminded his closest associates of this: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him." (John 6:44) Jesus initiated his relationships with his closest collaborators. In evangelizing, we simply convey or affirm Jesus' invitation to others. We cooperate to the best of our abilities, remembering that our success is not dependent on our efforts alone. In faith we make the effort — entrusting any "success" to God.

Jesus consoles his disciples with these words: "Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute." (Luke 21:5-19) **This teaching reminds us that God walks with us even in our most challenging moments.**

Pope Francis affirms this view in *The Joy of the Gospel*, **"The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative. 'He has loved us first.' (1 Jn 4:19) ...** Because we do not always see [the seeds we plant] growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks."

Given the challenges we face in our culture, Pope Francis further comments on the

CUARTO PRINCIPIO**Esta es la obra de dios,
no la nuestra**

No debemos asumir ni por un momento que nuestros esfuerzos por evangelizar el mundo o incluso a nuestros propios familiares y amigos dependen de nosotros. La labor del discipulado misionero es obra de Dios.

Jesús se lo recordó a sus colaboradores más cercanos al final de su ministerio de tres años: "Nadie puede venir a mí si el Padre que me ha enviado no le atrae". (Juan 6:44) Jesús inició sus relaciones con sus colaboradores más cercanos. Al evangelizar a los demás, nos limitamos a transmitir o afirmar la invitación de Jesús a los que le buscan. Colaboramos en la medida de nuestras posibilidades cuando y donde podemos. Nuestro éxito en

la evangelización de los demás no depende de nuestros esfuerzos, pero en la fe hacemos el esfuerzo, aunque no podamos estar seguros de lo que puede significar el "éxito" en un encuentro determinado.

La lectura del trigésimo tercer domingo del tiempo ordinario (ciclo C) es de carácter apocalíptico (Lucas 21,5-19). A pesar de su tono oscuro, Jesús consuela a sus discípulos con estas palabras: "Recordad que no debéis

disillusionment and despair we are likely to encounter, “No words of encouragement will be enough,” according to Pope Francis, “unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel.”

God walks
with us even
in our most
challenging
moments.



REFLECTION

- **Do I regularly pray to the Holy Spirit to inspire my efforts to evangelize?** *¿Rezo regularmente al Espíritu Santo para que inspire mis esfuerzos de evangelización?*
- **What helps me be “successful” as a missionary disciple?** *¿Qué me ayuda a tener “éxito” como discípulo misionero?*
- **Do I allow temporary setbacks to keep me from trusting that Holy Spirit is still at work?** *¿Permito que los contratiempos temporales me impidan confiar en que el Espíritu Santo sigue actuando?*

preparar vuestra defensa de antemano, porque yo mismo os daré una sabiduría al hablar que todos vuestros adversarios no podrán resistir ni refutar”. (Lucas 21:5-19) Esta enseñanza nos recuerda que Dios camina con nosotros incluso en nuestros momentos más difíciles.

El Papa Francisco afirma este punto de vista en La alegría del Evangelio, “La vida de la Iglesia debe revelar siempre con

claridad que Dios toma la iniciativa. Él nos ha amado primero.” (1 Jn 4:19) ... “Como no siempre vemos crecer [las semillas que plantamos], necesitamos una certeza interior, una convicción de que Dios es capaz de actuar en cada situación, incluso en medio de aparentes contratiempos.”

Teniendo en cuenta los retos a los que nos enfrentamos en nuestra cultura, el Papa Francisco comenta además la desilusión y la

desesperación que probablemente encontremos: “Ninguna palabra de aliento será suficiente”, según el Papa Francisco, “si no arde el fuego del Espíritu Santo en nuestros corazones. Una evangelización llena de espíritu es una evangelización guiada por el Espíritu Santo, porque él es el alma de la Iglesia llamada a anunciar el Evangelio fuego del Espíritu.”

— PRINCIPLE FIVE —

Prayer and hard work will be required of us, nonetheless.



The Gospels depict the hard work of missionary discipleship. In Jesus' story of an unfruitful fig tree (Luke 13:1-9), we can understand the fig tree as wayward mankind and the gardener as the Church. Hard work will be required if we are to help realize God's plans for his people, just as hard work was required in the case of the fig tree.

In this same reading, Jesus describes a builder who must "calculate the cost" of constructing a tower before proceeding, lest "onlookers should laugh at him." The second is a general who must determine if his ten thousand troops will be sufficient to the task before he goes into battle. (Luke 14:25-33) Making disciples may be God's work, but our part will require planning, resource management and effective execution.

As disciples of Jesus, we should not expect thanks per se, just as we should not anticipate an easy path. **The way of missionary discipleship is the way of the cross.**

The invitation to wait on tables is a motif central to our understanding of ministry. Unfortunately, we cannot assume that this ethic is the norm in today's Church. Pope Francis reflects on the challenges facing the modern Church in *The Joy of the Gospel*, "Today's obsession with immediate results makes it hard for pastoral workers to tolerate anything that smacks of disagreement, possible failure, criticism, the cross."

QUINTO PRINCIPIO

Sin embargo, se requiere de nosotros oración y trabajo duro

Los Evangelios describen el trabajo duro del discipulado misionero. En la historia de Jesús sobre una higuera infructuosa (Lucas

13:1-9), Podemos entender que la higuera es también como la humanidad descarriada y el jardinero como la Iglesia. Será necesario trabajar duro si queremos hacer realidad las esperanzas y los sueños de Dios para su pueblo, al igual que fue necesario trabajar duro en el caso de la higuera.

En esta misma lectura, Jesús describe un constructor que debe "calcular el costo" de la construcción de una torre antes de proceder,

para que "los espectadores no se rían de él". El segundo es un general que debe determinar si sus diez mil soldados serán suficientes para la tarea antes de ir a la batalla. (Lucas 14:25-33) Hacer discípulos puede ser la obra de Dios, pero nuestra parte requerirá planificación, gestión de recursos y ejecución eficaz.

Como discípulos de Jesús, no debemos esperar el agradecimiento en sí mismo, como tampoco debemos anticipar un camino fácil.



The way of missionary discipleship is the way of the cross.

REFLECTION

- **Do I know what to do to evangelize nominal Catholics? Those who are disaffected from the Church? The unchurched? Seekers?** *¿Sé qué hacer para evangelizar a los católicos nominales? ¿Aquellos que se han alejado de la Iglesia? ¿Los que no van a la iglesia? ¿Los que buscan?*
- **What resources might help me in my evangelization mission?** *¿Qué recursos pueden ayudarme en mi misión de evangelización?*
- **What prevents me from my best effort to evangelize others?** *¿Qué me impide hacer mi mejor esfuerzo para evangelizar a los demás?*
- **Do I harbor anger or distrust with the Church that may inhibit my effectiveness as a missionary disciple?** *¿Albergo rabia o desconfianza con la Iglesia eso puede inhibir mi eficacia como discípulo misionero?*
- **Do I need to be renewed in order to fulfill God's calling to missionary discipleship?** *¿Necesito renovarme para cumplir con el llamado de Dios al discipulado misionero?*

El camino del discipulado misionero es el camino de la cruz. La invitación a servir mesas es un motivo central en nuestra comprensión del ministerio. Desgraciadamente, no podemos asumir que esta ética sea la norma en la Iglesia de hoy. El Papa Francisco reflexiona sobre los retos a los que se enfrenta la Iglesia moderna en La alegría del Evangelio: “La obsesión actual por los resultados inmediatos hace que los agentes de pastoral no toleren nada que huelga a desacuerdo, a posible fracaso, a crítica, a cruz”.



— PRINCIPLE SIX —

Our efforts as missionary disciples will require our own ongoing conversion.



Pope Francis acknowledges in *The Joy of the Gospel*, our need for ongoing conversion as we take on the task of missionary discipleship. The Church's "missionary mandate ... calls for ongoing formation and maturation." In his book, *Let us Dream*, the pope affirms that confronting our own failures and weaknesses can be disorienting. "See where you are centered," he tells us, "and decenter yourself. The task is to open doors and windows and move out beyond ... I prefer the image of the pilgrim, who is one who decenters and so can transcend."

Pope Francis describes in *The Joy of the Gospel*, that this kind of ongoing conversion will not be possible without time in the desert (i.e., time in prayer): **"Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties and our fervor dies out."** Indeed, the "lack of a deep spirituality" can produce "pessimism, fatalism and mistrust."

Importantly, this call to continuous conversion pertains, not just to individuals, but to the Church as a whole. Pope Francis has encouraged us, in his call for a worldwide focus on synodality, to see the life and mission of the Church **as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.**

SEXTO PRINCIPIO

Nuestros esfuerzos como discípulos misioneros Requerirán nuestra propia conversión permanente

El Papa Francisco reconoce en La alegría del Evangelio, nuestra necesidad de una

conversión continua al asumir la tarea del discipulado misionero. El "mandato misionero de la Iglesia... exige una formación y maduración continuas". En su libro "Soñemos", el Papa afirma que enfrentarse a nuestros propios fallos y debilidades puede desorientar. "Mira dónde estás centrado", nos dice, "y desengáñate. La tarea consiste en abrir puertas y ventanas y salir al exterior... Prefiero la imagen del peregrino, que es quien

se descentra y así puede trascender".

El Papa Francisco describe en La alegría del Evangelio, que este tipo de conversión continua no será posible sin tiempo en el desierto (es decir, tiempo en la oración): "Sin momentos prolongados de adoración, de encuentro orante con la Palabra, de conversación sincera con el Señor, nuestro trabajo fácilmente pierde sentido; perdemos energía a causa del cansancio



Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless...

REFLECTION

- **Am I open and committed to my own continual conversion?** *¿Estoy abierto y comprometido con mi propia conversión continua?*
- **Am I open to receive instruction on best practices to evangelize?** *¿Estoy abierto a recibir instrucción sobre las mejores prácticas para evangelizar?*
- **Before I attempt to evangelize, do I ground myself in prayer?** *Antes de intentar evangelizar, ¿me apoyo en la oración?*

y las dificultades y nuestro fervor se apaga.” De hecho, la “falta de una espiritualidad profunda” puede producir “pesimismo, fatalismo y desconfianza.”

Y lo que es más importante, está llamada a la conversión continua se refiere, no sólo a los individuos, sino a la Iglesia en su conjunto. El Papa Francisco nos ha animado a su llamado a centrarse en la sinodalidad en todo el mundo (es decir: un “estilo particular

que califica la vida y la misión de la Iglesia, expresando su naturaleza de Pueblo de Dios en camino y reunido en asamblea, convocado por el Señor Jesús con la fuerza del Espíritu Santo para anunciar el Evangelio”).



— PRINCIPLE SEVEN —

Joy should be evident in our invitation to others to enter into a personal encounter with Jesus



The Church has long known that joy draws people to Jesus. In his 2013 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium—The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis agrees: “It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by ‘attraction.’”

Mary responds to God’s request of her with a simple “yes,” and then proceeds “in haste” to the hill country to be with her kinswoman Elizabeth. Mary’s response to Elizabeth’s greeting is filled with great joy: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.” (Luke 1:46-49)

Jesus’ public ministry begins with joyful hope. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus reads from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah proclaiming “‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord..’ He said to them, ‘Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21) Luke thus establishes Jesus’ entire three-year ministry as one of great joy!

Pope Francis also knows that joy lies at the very heart of our faith. In *The Joy of the Gospel* he defines this aspect of missionary discipleship: “**(A)n evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!**”

SÉPTIMO PRINCIPIO

La alegría debe ser evidente en nuestra invitación a los demás A entrar en un encuentro personal con Jesús

La Iglesia sabe desde hace tiempo que la alegría atrae a las personas hacia Jesús. En

su exhortación apostólica de 2013, Evangelii Gaudium—La alegría del Evangelio, el Papa Francisco está de acuerdo: “La Iglesia no crece por proselitismo, sino por ‘atracción.’”

María responde a la petición de Dios con un simple “sí”, y luego se dirige “deprisa” a la región montañosa para estar con su pariente Isabel. La respuesta de María al saludo de Isabel está llena de gran alegría: “Mi alma proclama la grandeza del Señor; mi espíritu

se alegra en Dios, mi salvador. Porque ha mirado la humildad de su sierva; he aquí que desde ahora todos los siglos me llamarán dichosa”. (Lucas 1:46-49)

El ministerio público de Jesús comienza con una alegre esperanza. En el Evangelio de Lucas, Jesús lee un rollo del profeta Isaías que proclama El Espíritu del Señor está sobre mí, porque me ha ungido para llevar la buena noticia a los pobres. Me ha enviado a



An evangelizer
must never look like
someone who has
just come back
from a funeral!



REFLECTION

- **What can I do to embrace my role as a missionary disciple with great joy?** *¿Qué puedo hacer para asumir mi papel de discípulo misionero con gran alegría?*
- **How do I proclaim the Good News with hope and joy?** *¿Cómo proclamo la Buena Nueva con esperanza y alegría?*
- **What is the source of my joy and how can I share this story with others?** *¿Cuál es la fuente de mi alegría y cómo puedo compartir esta historia con los demás?*
- **How might I actively invite others to experience the joy that comes from a personal relationship with Jesus?** *¿Cómo podría invitar activamente a otros a experimentar la alegría que proviene de una relación personal con Jesús?*

proclamar la libertad a los cautivos y la vista a los ciegos, a liberar a los oprimidos y a proclamar un año agradable para el Señor". Les dijo: "Hoy se ha cumplido este pasaje de la Escritura que acaban de oír" (Lucas 1:1-4; 4:14-21). ¡Así, Lucas establece que todo el ministerio de tres años de Jesús fue de gran alegría!

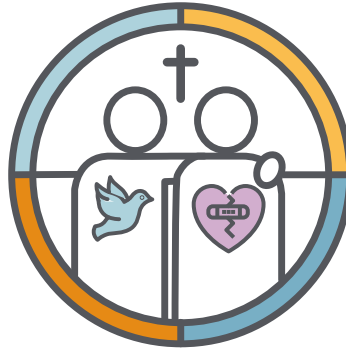
El Papa Francisco también sabe que la alegría está en el corazón de nuestra fe.

En La alegría del Evangelio define este aspecto del discipulado misionero: "¡Un evangelizador nunca debe tener el aspecto de alguien que acaba de regresar de un funeral!"



— PRINCIPLE EIGHT—

Healing and reconciliation are central to our efforts as missionary disciples.



Jesus instructs that we should share with others what God has done in healing and restoring us. Jesus restored those whom he encountered back to a right relationship with themselves, to right relationships with others and, through the forgiveness of their sins, to a right relationship with God. In fact, we see many such healings in Luke's Gospel.

Jesus associated righteousness (the restoration of right relationships) with healing, a concrete manifestation of God's mercy. In his 2018 Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (*Rejoice and be glad*), on the call to holiness in today's world, Pope Francis defines mercy as the "beating heart of the Gospel" and links it directly to the task of missionary discipleship, emphasizing that "This is a time for mercy."

Through baptism and the sacrament of reconciliation, the Church offers the pathway to forgiveness and spiritual healing. To those who have been victims of sins committed upon them, we should be a place of compassion and restoration.

Jesus calls all of us to repentance and a new life as part of our response to the Good News. In addressing the depth of the mercy we are to show others, Jesus guides us: "(W)hen Peter asked how many times he should forgive someone, Jesus said not seven times but seventy times seven." (Matthew 18:22)

OCTAVO PRINCIPIO

La sanación y la reconciliación son fundamentales Para nuestros esfuerzos

Jesús nos indica que debemos compartir con los demás lo que Dios ha hecho al sanarnos y restaurarnos. Jesús devolvió a los que encontró a una relación correcta con

ellos mismos, a una relación correcta con los demás y, mediante el perdón de sus pecados, a una relación correcta con Dios. De hecho, en el Evangelio de Lucas vemos muchas curaciones de este tipo. Parece que Jesús asoció la justicia (es decir, el restablecimiento de las relaciones correctas) con la sanación, una manifestación concreta, de hecho, de la misericordia de Dios. En su Exhortación Apostólica Gaudete et Exsultate (Alegraos

y regocijaos) de 2018, sobre la llamada a la santidad en el mundo actual, el Papa Francisco define la misericordia como el "corazón palpitante del Evangelio" y la vincula directamente a la tarea del discipulado misionero, subrayando que "Este es un tiempo para la misericordia."

A través del bautismo y del sacramento de la reconciliación, la Iglesia ofrece el camino hacia el perdón y la curación espiritual.

In his book, *The Name of God is Mercy*, Pope Francis reminds us, “God forgives not with a decree but with a caress.” As Pope Francis notes in his book, *Let Us Dream*, “Jesus did not found the Church as a citadel of purity nor as a constant parade of heroes and saints... (T)he Church can be an instrument of God’s mercy because it needs that mercy.”

Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato Sí (On Care for our Common Home)*, links this need for healing, peace and reconciliation to the Sabbath: “Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world.”



REFLECTION

- **Do I acknowledge my own need for healing?**
¿Reconozco mi propia necesidad de sanación?
- **Is my interaction with others characterized by compassion? Am I committed to the healing of others I encounter?** *¿Mi interacción con los demás se caracteriza por la compasión? ¿Estoy comprometido con la sanación de los demás que encuentre en mi camino?*
- **Do I embrace the Sabbath as a gift from God oriented to the restoration of right relationships?**
¿Acepto el sábado como un regalo de Dios orientado a la restauración de las relaciones correctas?
- **How do I enter into and invite others to experience Sunday Mass as a gift from God which renews us as his people and strengthens us by his Word and the Holy Eucharist?** *¿Cómo entro e invito a los demás a vivir la misa dominical como un don de Dios que nos renueva como pueblo y nos fortalece con su Palabra y la Sagrada Eucaristía?*

God forgives
not with a
decree but
with a caress.

Para los que han sido víctimas de pecados cometidos sobre ellos, debemos ser un lugar de compasión y restauración.

Jesús nos llama a todos al arrepentimiento y a una nueva vida como parte de nuestra respuesta a la Buena Nueva. Al abordar la profundidad de la misericordia que debemos mostrar a los demás, “(C)uando Pedro le preguntó cuántas veces debía perdonar a alguien, Jesús le dijo no siete veces, sino

setenta veces siete, (Mateo 18:22)

En su libro *El nombre de Dios es misericordia*, el Papa Francisco nos recuerda que “Dios no perdona con un decreto, sino con una caricia.” Como señala el Papa Francisco en su libro *Soñemos*, “Jesús no fundó la Iglesia como una ciudadela de pureza ni como un desfile constante de héroes y santos... (L) a Iglesia puede ser un instrumento de la misericordia de Dios porque necesita esa

misericordia.”

Finalmente, el Papa Francisco vincula esta necesidad de sanación, paz y reconciliación con el sábado: “El domingo, como el sábado judío, debe ser un día que sane nuestras relaciones con Dios, con nosotros mismos, con los demás y con el mundo.”

— PRINCIPLE NINE —

An inviting and welcoming outreach is essential to our efforts as missionary disciples.



Jesus abhorred judgmental attitudes. “Stop judging,” he tells his disciples, “and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.” (Luke 6:27-38). Jesus was more concerned about those who had fallen short of the community’s expectations than those who lived lives of apparent virtue, as seen in the parables of the lost sheep, the misplaced coin, and the story of the prodigal son. (Luke 15:1-32)

Our behaviors need to model Christ if we are to be true to our calling as missionary disciples. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis explains the importance of having an inviting and welcoming stance with others, “this demands certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and a welcome which is non-judgmental.” He further asserts that, “the Church will have to initiate everyone into this ‘art of accompaniment’.”

Missionary disciples cannot be confined to their parish’s worship space. We will need to step out of our comfort zones and accept a certain level of risk. Pope Francis states clearly in *The Joy of the Gospel*, **“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”**

NOVENO PRINCIPIO

**Un alcance atractivo y acogedor es esencial
Para nuestros esfuerzos**

Jesús aborrecía las actitudes de juicio. “Dejad de juzgar” – Les dice a sus discípulos- y no serás juzgado. Dejad de condenar y no seréis condenados. Perdonad y seréis

perdonados.

(Lucas 6:27-38) Jesús se preocupaba más por los que no estaban a la altura de las expectativas de la comunidad que por los que llevaban una vida aparentemente virtuosa, de ahí las dos parábolas de la oveja perdida y la moneda extraviada (Lucas 15:1-10) y la historia del hijo pródigo.

Nuestros comportamientos deben modelar a Cristo si queremos ser fieles a

nuestra vocación de discípulos misioneros. En La alegría del Evangelio, el Papa Francisco explica la importancia de tener una postura de invitación y acogida con los demás, “esto exige ciertas actitudes que favorecen la apertura al mensaje: la cercanía, la disposición al diálogo, la paciencia, una calidez y una acogida que no juzga”. Además, afirma que “la Iglesia deberá iniciar a todos en este “arte del acompañamiento””.

Our accompaniment is not aimless. **We walk together with and towards Jesus. As we encounter him more deeply, our hearts begin to change and our lives become renewed.** Jesus calls all people to a better way to live, in the forgiveness and the freedom of the love of God.

This will require great patience, too, and an abiding trust in God. Again, we cannot measure “success” with respect to our efforts as the world understands the term. “At times,” Pope Francis reminds us in *The Joy of the Gospel*, “we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it.”

As we encounter him more deeply, our hearts begin to change and our lives become renewed.



REFLECTION

- **Am I judgmental with respect to others, especially those not engaged in the Church?** *¿Soy criticón con respecto a los demás, especialmente a los que no participan en la Iglesia?*
- **What would it mean to recognize others as bearing the image and likeness of Christ?** *¿Qué significaría reconocer a los demás como portadores de la imagen y semejanza de Cristo?*
- **Am I fully prepared to “accompany” others in their journey?** *¿Estoy plenamente preparado para “acompañar” a otros en su camino?*
- **Am I patient with others whom I encounter as missionary disciples?** *¿Soy paciente con los demás que encuentro como discípulos misioneros?*

Los discípulos misioneros que leen los signos de los tiempos y responden con fidelidad no pueden limitarse al espacio de culto de su parroquia. Tendremos que salir de nuestra zona de confort y aceptar un cierto nivel de riesgo. El Papa Francisco es claro en este sentido: “Prefiero una Iglesia magullada, herida y sucia por haber salido a la calle, que una Iglesia insana por estar encerrada y por aferrarse a su propia seguridad.

Nuestro acompañamiento no es sin rumbo. Caminamos juntos con y hacia Jesús. A medida que nos encontramos con él más profundamente, nuestros corazones comienzan a cambiar y nuestras vidas se renuevan. Jesús llama a todas las personas a una manera mejor de vivir, en el perdón y la libertad del amor de Dios.

Esto requerirá también una gran paciencia, y una, confianza permanente en Dios.

Una vez más, no podemos medir el “éxito” con respecto a nuestros esfuerzos tal como el mundo entiende el término. “A veces”, el Papa Francisco, nos recuerda La alegría del Evangelio “tenemos que ser como el padre del hijo pródigo, que siempre tiene la puerta abierta para que, cuando el hijo vuelva, pueda pasar fácilmente por ella.”

— PRINCIPLE TEN —

We should embrace a sense of urgency
In our work in the vineyard.



Jesus shares his most compelling desire and statement of purpose, **“I have come to set the world on fire and how I wish it were already blazing.”** (Luke 12:49-53) Jesus is bursting at the seams to announce the Good News of the Father’s love to all who hear his voice. It seems there is so much to do and so little time! “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few...Ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.” (Luke 10:2)

There is a foreboding side to this urgency as well. We know that we will be held accountable for our efforts, especially as they pertain to those among us who are spiritually vulnerable. **Souls are at stake!**

A certain urgency is reflected in much of Pope Francis’ writing, too. He often uses the word “crisis.” In his writings (*The Joy of the Gospel, Let Us Dream*), Pope Francis describes how the family is in crisis, our postmodern culture is in crisis, our politics are in crisis, the world economy is in crisis, the environment is in crisis and so on. His concern seems to be out of his sense that the Church may not be living up to its missionary calling at this pivotal moment in time. Pope Francis knows that we, too, will be held accountable for our labor in the Father’s vineyard.

DECIMO PRINCIPIO

Debemos adoptar un sentido de urgencia En nuestro trabajo en la viña

Jesús comparte su deseo más apremiante: “He venido a incendiar el mundo y cómo quisiera que ardiera ya”. (Lucas 12:49-53) Jesús está a punto de estallar para

anunciar la Buena Nueva del amor del Padre a todos y cada uno de los que escuchen su voz. Parece que hay tanto que hacer y tan poco tiempo. Una vez más, “(l)a mies es abundante pero los obreros son pocos... (P)ide al dueño de la mies que envíe obreros a su mies”. (Lucas 10:2)

Esta urgencia tiene también un lado premonitorio. Sabemos que tendremos que rendir cuentas de nuestros esfuerzos, espe-

cialmente en lo que se refiere a los que son espiritualmente vulnerables entre nosotros. Las almas están en juego.

Una cierta urgencia se refleja también en gran parte de los escritos del Papa Francisco. A menudo utiliza la palabra “crisis” En sus escritos (La alegría del Evangelio, Soñemos), el Papa Francisco describe cómo la familia está en crisis, nuestra cultura postmoderna está en crisis, nuestra política está en crisis, la



I have come to set
the world on fire and
how I wish it were
already blazing.



REFLECTION

- Is my heart on fire to proclaim the Father's love to all? *¿Arde mi corazón para proclamar a todos el amor del Padre?*
- Do I fully appreciate the nature of the challenges that lie before us? *¿Comprendo plenamente la naturaleza de los retos que tenemos ante nosotros?*
- Do I recognize opportunities that may be available to me to share the Good News? *¿Comprendo plenamente la naturaleza de los retos que tenemos ante nosotros para compartir la Buena Nueva?*
- Do I fully understand what is at stake, from God's perspective — that souls are at stake? *¿Comprendo plenamente lo que está en juego, desde la perspectiva de Dios, que las almas están en juego?*

economía mundial está en crisis, el medio ambiente está en crisis, etc. Su preocupación parece obedecer a su sensación de que la Iglesia puede no estar a la altura de su vocación misionera en este momento crucial. El Papa Francisco sabe que también nosotros tendremos que rendir cuentas de nuestro trabajo en la viña del Padre.





A Concluding Reflection



Let us set Northwest Indiana ablaze
in God's love as we boldly proclaim
Jesus as Lord!

A Concluding Reflection

In my homily during the Mass that opened our current Synod on October 17, 2021, I shared a personal reflection. I recalled a visit to one of our local parishes, where I was invited to not only participate in a bonfire, but to light the fire!

Now fire can be intimidating. A fire can get out of control. A fire can be dangerous. Once a fire is raging, it can be hard to contain. And yet we know that fire can be beneficial, too. In our local industries, fire is used to purify metal and to shape it.

Fire is featured prominently in Scripture. The appearance of fire played a prominent role at the Pentecost, as tongues of fire descended upon those who had gathered in the upper room. Jesus affirmed that he had come to “set the world on fire,” a startling claim to which he added, “How I wish it were already blazing!” Why? Because the fire of the Holy Spirit — that burning intensity that the Lord wants us to have in our hearts, that coming together so that the fire of God’s love can be made visible to all and a source of heat and light and strength and power — is such a powerful biblical image.

The Father sends the Holy Spirit so that we will not be alone, so that we will know the truth of God’s love and so be enabled to live out this great truth in our time. The same Holy Spirit has guided the Church over the centuries. **The Holy Spirit is the guardian of the deposit of faith, but more than a guardian, too. The Holy Spirit impels us forward.**

When I was ordained as your bishop, I reflected on the many fires that had already been lit in the Diocese of Gary as a result of the synod that had taken place in 2017. Bishop Hying and those who assisted him listened attentively to voices from across the diocese. He “walked with” everyone who participated in this memorable event to better understand the needs of God’s people and to identify ways in which we, as Church, can attend to those needs.

Una reflexión final

En mi homilía durante la misa de apertura de nuestro actual Sínodo, el 17 de octubre de 2021, compartí una reflexión personal. La repito aquí porque estaba organizada en torno a una imagen evocadora que complementa, creo, el análisis más formal que aquí se comparte. Recordé una visita a una de nuestras parroquias locales, donde me invitaron a participar en una fogata. Mientras los feligreses se reunían, me avisaron de que pronto me pedirían que encendiera el fuego.

El fuego puede ser intimidante. Un fuego puede estar fuera de control. Un fuego puede ser peligroso. Una vez que el fuego hace estragos, puede ser difícil de contener. Sin embargo,

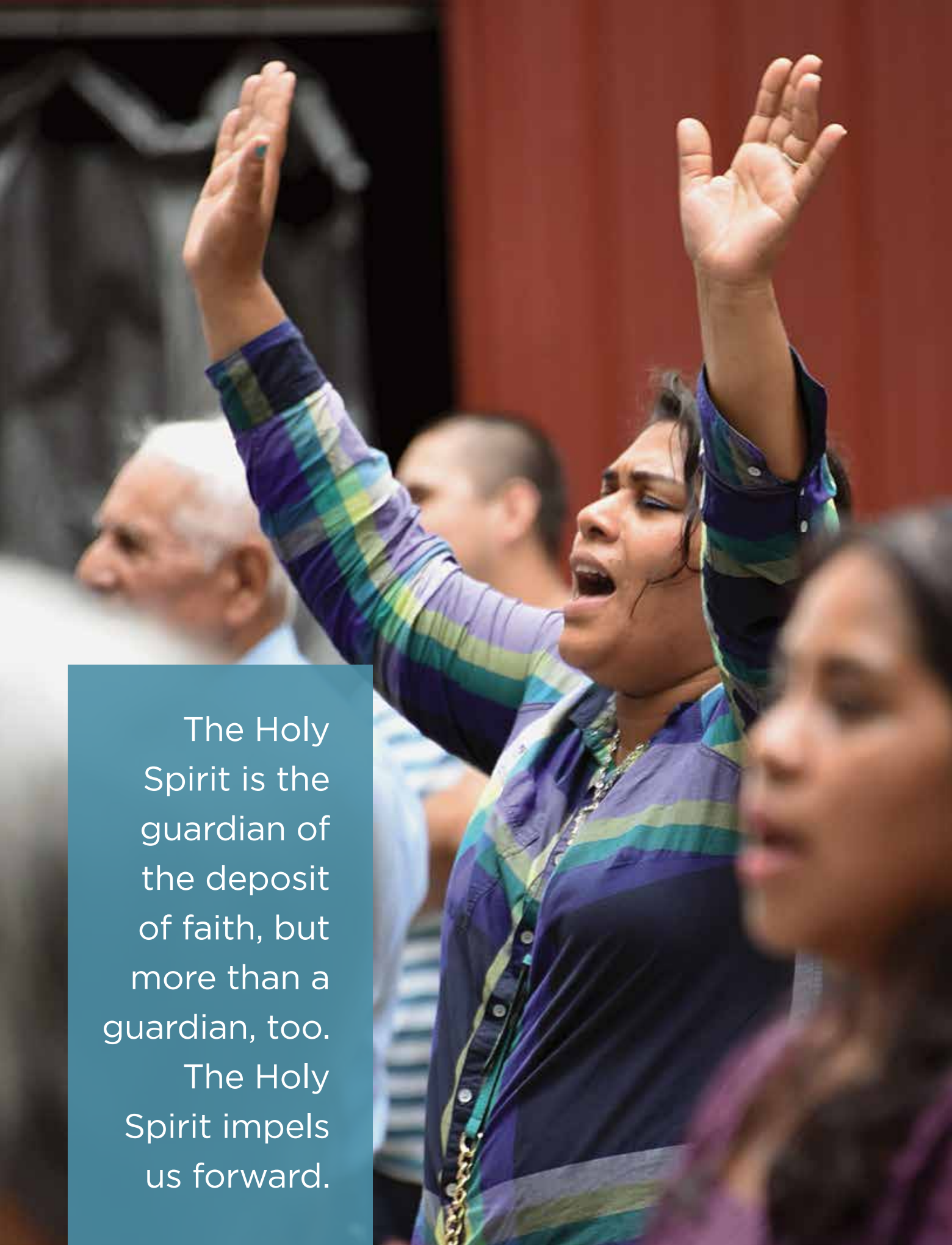
sabemos que el fuego también puede ser beneficioso. En nuestras industrias locales, el fuego se utiliza para purificar el metal y darle forma.

Y también sabemos que el fuego ocupa un lugar destacado en las Escrituras. La aparición del fuego tuvo un papel destacado en el Pentecostés, por supuesto. Lenguas de fuego descendieron sobre los que se habían reunido en el cenáculo. De nuevo, Jesús afirmó que había venido a “traer fuego al mundo”, una afirmación sorprendente a la que añadió: “¿Cómo me gustaría que ya estuviera ardiendo!”. ¿Por qué? Porque el fuego del Espíritu Santo -esa intensidad ardiente que el Señor quiere que tengamos en nuestros corazones, esa unión para que el fuego del amor de Dios se haga visible a todos y sea fuente de calor y

luz y fuerza y poder- es una imagen bíblica tan poderosa.

El Padre envía al Espíritu Santo para que no estemos solos, para que conozcamos la verdad del amor de Dios y seamos capaces de vivir esta gran verdad en nuestro tiempo. El mismo Espíritu Santo ha guiado a la Iglesia a lo largo de los siglos. El mismo Espíritu Santo se encuentra en la Escritura y en la tradición y también en el Magisterio. El Espíritu Santo es el guardián del depósito de la fe, pero también es más que un guardián. El Espíritu Santo nos impulsa a avanzar.

Cuando fui ordenado como su obispo, reflexioné sobre los muchos fuegos que ya se habían encendido en la diócesis de Gary como resultado del sínodo que había tenido lugar en

A woman in a vibrant rainbow-striped shirt is the central figure, her hands raised high in a gesture of prayer or praise. Her mouth is open as if she is singing or shouting. In the background, other people are visible, including an older man on the left and another woman in the foreground on the right, all appearing to be part of a religious gathering. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the woman in the center.

The Holy Spirit is the guardian of the deposit of faith, but more than a guardian, too.

The Holy Spirit impels us forward.

That torch has been passed on to me. In my view, we should rekindle this fire and send it off in new directions as we confront the many challenges that have emerged in this unique moment in our history, including our experience of COVID-19. Indeed, we should embrace anew the title of the pastoral letter shared at the close of the diocese's 2017 Synod, "Go Make Disciples," as a reminder of the missionary mandate given to all of us by Jesus. This is our job — we are to draw others into a loving relationship with Jesus, to go make disciples!

I know this can seem more than a bit daunting. "Me? A missionary disciple? Me? Promoting Jesus to my loved ones and to others who don't know him? How can I do that?" Yes, we can easily assemble a list of reasons to support why we should shy away from the path of missionary discipleship. "I'm going to stay in my comfort zone. I'm not going to light any new fires. I'm going to stick with what I've got."

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis asserts that every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Jesus. If you have encountered the love of God in Jesus, you are a missionary. We are all encouraged to be missionaries.

Nonetheless, too few among us have embraced this calling. Some may say, "I think of myself as a follower of Jesus... but I'm not qualified or even willing to be sent out to do anything." The truth is that in our baptism, God has prepared us to always and everywhere be missionary disciples. As followers of Jesus, we must trust in the Holy Spirit and always be on mission!

Pope Francis provides us with examples in *The Joy of the Gospel*. "Look at the first disciples," the Holy Father tells us. **"Look at those first disciples who — immediately after encountering the loving gaze of Jesus — went forth to proclaim him joyfully: 'We have found the Messiah!'** They had encountered Jesus and then told others whom they met along the way about him. The Samaritan woman became a

2017. El obispo Hying y quienes lo asistieron escucharon atentamente las voces de toda la diócesis. Él "camino" con todos los que participaron en este memorable evento para entender mejor las necesidades del pueblo de Dios y para identificar las formas en que nosotros, como Iglesia, podemos atender esas necesidades.

Esa antorcha me ha sido pasada a mí. En mi opinión, debemos reavivar este fuego y enviarlo en nuevas direcciones al enfrentarnos a los muchos desafíos que han surgido en este momento único de nuestra historia, incluyendo nuestra experiencia de COVID-19. De hecho, deberíamos abrazar de nuevo el título de la carta pastoral compartida en la clausura del Sínodo de la diócesis de 2017, "Id y hacer discípulos," como un recordatorio del mandato

misionero que nos dio Jesús a todos nosotros. ¡Este es nuestro trabajo! Debemos ir a hacer discípulos. Tenemos el reto, en este tiempo y lugar, de atraer a otros a una relación de amor con Jesús.

Sé que esto puede parecer un poco desalentador. "¿Yo? ¿Un discípulo misionero? ¿Yo? ¿Promover a Jesús a mis seres queridos y a otros que no lo conocen? ¿Cómo puedo hacer eso?" Sí, podemos fácilmente armar una lista de razones de por qué debemos rechazar el camino del discipulado misionero. "Voy a quedarme en mi zona de comodidad. No voy a encender ningún fuego nuevo. Me voy a quedar con lo que tengo".

En *Evangelii Gaudium*, La alegría del Evangelio, el Papa Francisco afirma que todo

cristiano es misionero en la medida en que ha encontrado el amor de Dios en Jesús. Si has encontrado el amor de Dios en Jesús, eres un misionero. A todos se nos anima a ser misioneros.

Sin embargo, muy pocos de nosotros han abrazado este llamado. Algunos pueden decir: "Me considero un seguidor de Jesús y eso me sirve, al menos hasta cierto punto, pero no estoy cualificado ni dispuesto a ser enviado a hacer nada". La verdad es que, en nuestro bautismo, Dios nos ha preparado para ser siempre y en todo lugar discípulos misioneros. ¡Como seguidores de Jesús debemos confiar en el Espíritu Santo y estar siempre en misión!

El Papa Francisco nos da ejemplos. "Miren a los primeros discípulos", nos dice el Santo

missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans came to believe in him because of this woman's testimony. The same was true for St. Paul. After his encounter with Jesus, he immediately proclaimed Jesus as Lord. “

Pope Francis asks: “What are we waiting for?” To be a missionary disciple is a joyful life. It is a beautiful calling. To be open to the Holy Spirit's work in our time is a great adventure!

The time came for me to light the bonfire. “Here you go, Bishop.” And I said, “Oh, no. That's okay. You can do it.” And then I thought about it for a moment. What a powerful symbol — a bonfire — and reminder that “I have come to set the world ablaze!” I decided to light the fire and at a spot where it had all been prearranged, I lit it!

Now, truth be told, the bonfire did not get off to great start. My efforts did not set the wood — or the world — ablaze. I soon noticed, however, that there was another spot ready to be lit and, sure enough, someone took my lighter and lit it. And this little flame took off! And then it was as if you had two little fires going in the big pile of wood. And I found myself cheering for my little flame. I wanted it to find its way to the bigger fire so that we could say, “Yes, this is a great bonfire!” And it did all come together. In time, the two fires united and we did, indeed, have a great bonfire.

I do not know yet about the many little fires the Lord is going to set ablaze for us in the Diocese of Gary, but I trust that he will do so if we remain open to him. I can assure you that it will happen. And, yes, we might say, “I've only got a little bit of kindling. I don't have a whole lot here with which to work.”

Be patient, however. Wait and see what the Lord will do. It is all about remaining open to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can use us and we can, in time, do more than we could ever have asked for or imagined.

Padre. Miren a esos primeros discípulos que - inmediatamente después de encontrar la mirada amorosa de Jesús - salieron a proclamarlo con alegría: “¡Hemos encontrado al Mesías!”. Habían encontrado a Jesús y luego hablaron de él a otros que encontraron en el camino. La samaritana se convirtió en misionera inmediatamente después de hablar con Jesús y muchos samaritanos llegaron a creer en él gracias al testimonio de esta mujer. Lo mismo ocurrió con San Pablo. Después de su encuentro con Jesús, inmediatamente proclamó a Jesús como Señor.

El Papa Francisco pregunta: “¿Qué esperamos?” Ser discípulo misionero es una vida alegre. Es una hermosa vocación. Estar abierto a la obra del Espíritu Santo en nuestro tiempo

es nada menos que una gran aventura.

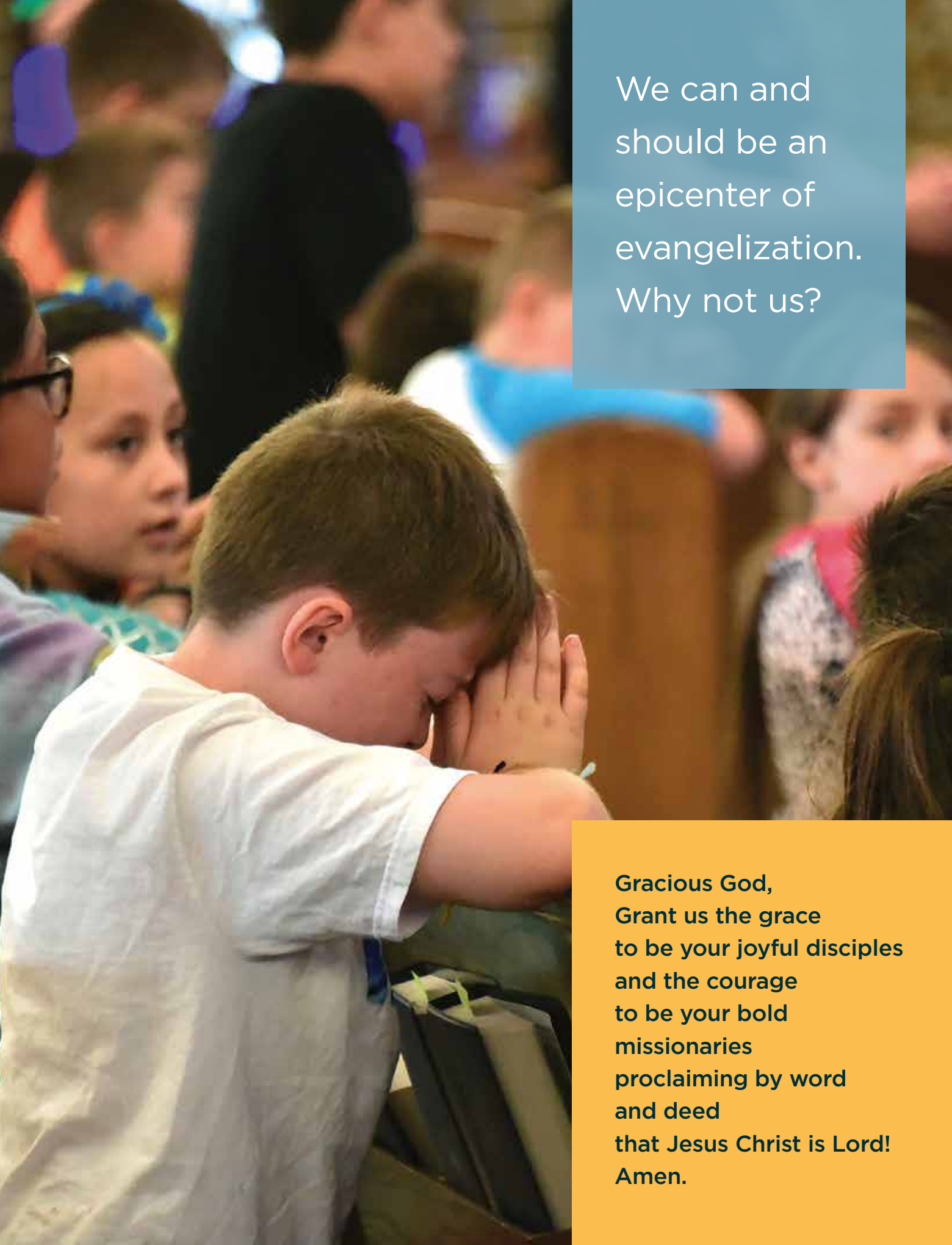
Llegó el momento de encender la fogata. “Aquí tiene, obispo”. Y yo dije: “Oh, no. Está bien. Tú puedes hacerlo”. Y luego lo pensé por un momento. Qué símbolo tan poderoso -una fogata- y el recordatorio de que “he venido a traer fuego al mundo”. Decidí encender la fogata y en un lugar en el que todo estaba previsto, ¡la encendí!

A decir verdad, la fogata no tuvo un buen comienzo. Mis esfuerzos no hicieron arder la madera -ni el mundo-. Sin embargo, pronto me di cuenta de que había otro punto listo para encenderla y, efectivamente, alguien tomó mi encendedor y la encendió. Y esta pequeña llama prendió. Y entonces fue como si hubiera dos pequeños fuegos encendidos en

la gran pila de leña. Y me encontré animando a mi pequeña llama. Quería que encontrara su camino hacia el fuego más grande para que pudiéramos decir: “¡Sí, esta es una gran fogata!” Y todo se unió. Con el tiempo, las dos llamas se unieron y, efectivamente, tuvimos una gran fogata.

No sé todavía los múltiples pequeños fuegos que el Señor va a encender para nosotros en la Diócesis de Gary, pero confío en que lo hará si permanecemos abiertos a él. Les puedo asegurar que así será. Y, sí, podríamos decir: “Sólo tengo un poco de leña. No tengo mucho con lo que trabajar”.

Sin embargo, tengan paciencia. Esperen y verán lo que el Señor hará. Se trata de permanecer abiertos al Espíritu Santo.



We can and
should be an
epicenter of
evangelization.
Why not us?

Gracious God,
Grant us the grace
to be your joyful disciples
and the courage
to be your bold
missionaries
proclaiming by word
and deed
that Jesus Christ is Lord!
Amen.

Together, let us attend to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that this vision — this good work begun in us — will be realized here in the Diocese of Gary. The 2020 census revealed that there are 807,703 souls living in our four counties. Not all are Catholic, of course, but all need to encounter the love of Jesus. **We can and should be an epicenter of evangelization. Why not us?**

Northwest Indiana needs to know and experience the love of Jesus now more than ever, to know there is a better way to live, a life full of hope and joy and the love of Jesus. The Lord has given us all we need to be his vessels. Strengthened by the Eucharist, renewed by all the sacraments and the Word of God, we can bring revival and renewal to individuals, families, parishes and our communities. Encouraged by the example of our Blessed Mother, the first and greatest of all disciples and a true exemplar for all missionaries, let us embrace the challenge to be both disciples and missionaries.

Let us set Northwest Indiana ablaze in God's love as we boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord!



Jesus, I trust in you.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

+ Robert J. McClory

The Most Reverend Robert J. McClory

Bishop

Diocese of Gary

**Original unabridged pastoral letter published
on February 2, 2022**

***Dios bondadoso,
Concédenos la gracia
de tus alegres discípulos
y el valor de ser tus
audaces misioneros
proclamando con
palabras y hechos
que ¡Jesucristo
es El Señor!
Amén.***

El Espíritu Santo puede utilizarnos y nosotros podemos, con el tiempo, hacer más de lo que jamás hubiéramos podido pedir o imaginar.

Escuchemos juntos los impulsos del Espíritu Santo. Oremos para que esta visión - esta buena obra iniciada en nosotros - se realice aquí en la Diócesis de Gary. El censo de 2020 reveló que hay 807.703 almas viviendo en nuestros cuatro condados. No todos son católicos, por supuesto, pero todos necesitan encontrar el amor de Jesús. Podemos y debemos ser un epicentro de evangelización. ¿Por qué no nosotros?

El noroeste de Indiana necesita conocer y experimentar el amor de Jesús ahora más que nunca, para saber que hay una mejor manera de vivir, una vida llena de esperanza y alegría y el amor de Jesús. El Señor nos ha dado todo lo que necesitamos para ser sus vasos. Fortalecidos

por la Eucaristía, renovados por todos los sacramentos y la Palabra de Dios, podemos llevar el renacimiento y la renovación a las personas, las familias, las parroquias y nuestras comunidades. Alentados por el ejemplo de nuestra Santísima Madre, la primera y más grande de todos los discípulos y un verdadero ejemplo para todos los misioneros, abracemos el desafío de ser tanto discípulos como misioneros.

Hagamos que el noroeste de Indiana arda en el amor de Dios mientras proclamamos audazmente a Jesús como el Señor!

**Carta original íntegra publicada el
2 febrero de 2022**



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All are Welcome

Todos son bienvenidos

Join Bishop McClory
2 p.m. - Sunday
June 19, 2022



Diocesan Eucharistic Procession

Procesión Eucarística Diocesana

1.6 miles from Our Lady of Grace
to St. James the Less in Highland
- Concludes with Picnic -

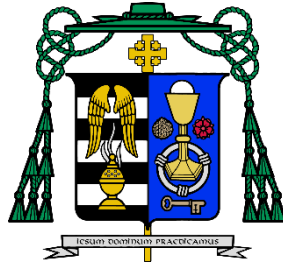


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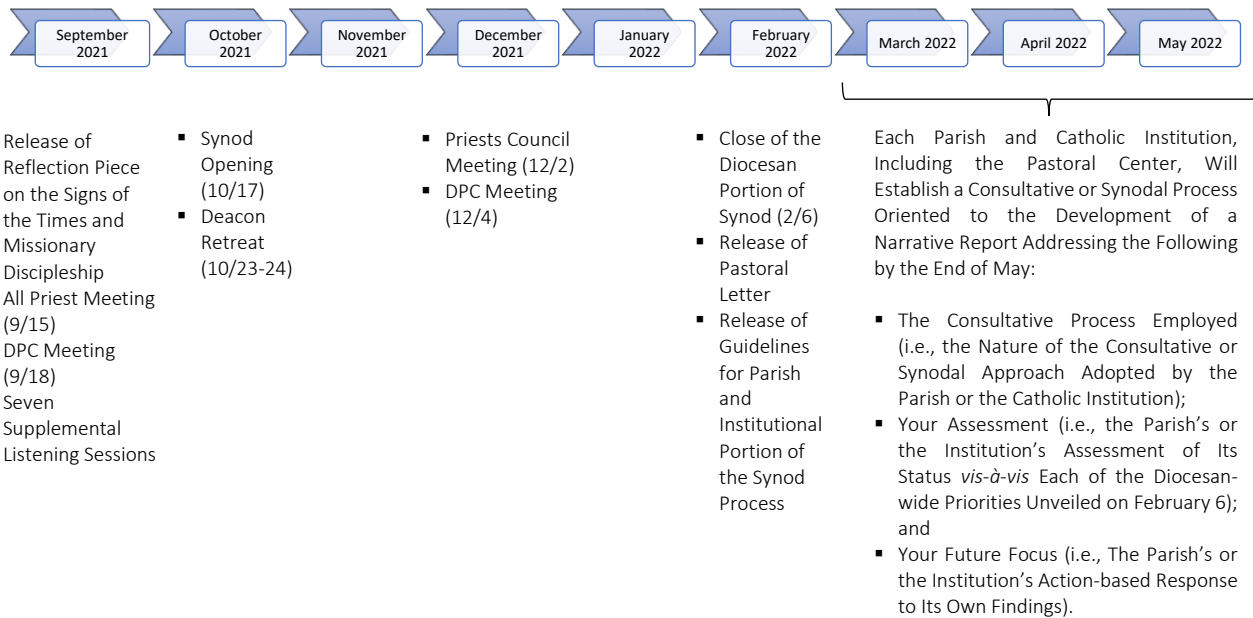


February 4, 2022

Dear Monsignor/Father:

I share the following information with you now in the hope that it will provide context both for the homily I will share at our Synod Mass on Sunday, February 6 at 2:00 p.m. at Holy Angels Cathedral and for my subsequent remarks after Mass pertaining to the many contributions shared in the several listening sessions and Synod events hosted over the course of the last five months.

On February 6, we will move to a new phase in our ongoing Synod process. See the latter three steps in the 9-month timeline provided below.



Please read the attachment entitled "What's Next?" with "Evaluation Questions for Parishes." As outlined, we have designed a process that should provide you with considerable flexibility.

1. Your Consultative Process

Most importantly, a robust consultative process should be established in each parish. An *ad hoc* team could serve this purpose. In some parishes, the parish's pastoral council or leadership team could work well, too. It will be important to ensure sufficient diversity, however. The preparatory documents for the worldwide Synod put a premium on a diversity of perspectives (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).

2. An Analysis of a Series of Evaluation Questions Focused on Our Two Synod Priorities

Each consultative team should participate in a formation session using a Pastoral Letter I will release this Sunday entitled, "*We Proclaim Jesus As Lord...*" The letter is focused in a particular way on our twin identities as disciples and as missionaries. This formation experience could extend over a series of gatherings.

The consultative team you convene should then meet as needed to methodically work through the several evaluation questions associated with each of the two priorities that emerged out of the diocesan portion of our current Synod process: one, we are called to be disciples; and two, we are called to be missionaries. See attached.

For some of you, your Synod 2017 Synod plan could provide a beginning point for your parish's deliberations. For others, starting fresh with the attached evaluation questions might be more appropriate. We know, too, that various tools could be used in this analytic portion of the process. Several options in this regard will be examined in a forthcoming webinar. Individual consultations can be arranged, as well, and facilitation services are available, too.

3. Your Action Plan

Following the conclusion of this extended assessment, I ask that you and your consultative team develop a select set of action steps that hold promise with respect to our two priorities. I recommend a three-year time horizon for this propose.

Finally, I ask that you and your consultative team summarize all of the above in a narrative report addressed to me. It should describe the consultative process you used and why it was chosen, your assessment of your parish *vis-à-vis* the several evaluation questions associated with each of our diocesan priorities, and your parish's action plan for moving forward.

I would appreciate receiving your report by the end of May. If additional time is needed, however, please let me know. Although it is important for us to move expeditiously in this regard, I am more interested in "getting it right" than in "getting it done" by an arbitrary due date.

Further, please know that I am committed to providing whatever consultation, training, or facilitation services you may deem appropriate and helpful along the way. I hope to visit your parish at some future date in order to meet with you and members of your consultative team so that we can delve more deeply into the content of your parish's report.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of this initiative. I am hopeful that it will set the stage for the productive and faithful formation of disciples and missionaries in the Diocese of Gary for many years to come. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns that I may be able to address as you proceed.

Asking God's blessings upon you and your parishioners, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert J. McClory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R'.

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary

What's Next?

We now move to the parish and institutional portion of our diocesan Synod 2022 process. Each of our parishes, key Catholic Institutions, and senior staff at the Pastoral Center are now invited to undertake a robust consultative process focused on two priorities that emerged out of our current Synod process, both of which are consistent with the findings of our 2017 Synod, certain “signs of the times,” and Pope Francis’ invitation into a new experience of synodality. A three-step process is recommended.



1. A Consultative Process

Most importantly, a robust consultative process should be established. An *ad hoc* team could serve this purpose. In some parishes, the parish’s pastoral council or leadership team could work well, too. It will be important to ensure sufficient diversity, however. The preparatory documents for the worldwide Synod put a premium on a diversity of perspectives (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).

2. An Analysis of a Series of Evaluation Questions Focused on Our Two Synod Priorities

Each consultative team should participate in an extended formation session using the Pastoral Letter Bishop McClory’s has shared with us: “*We proclaim Jesus as Lord...*” The principles outlined in this letter were featured in our Synod 2022 formation process and decisions. Together these principles speak in a powerful way to our twin identities as disciples and as missionaries.

The consultative team convened for this purpose should then meet as needed to methodically work through the several evaluation questions associated with each of the two priorities that emerged out of the diocesan portion of our current Synod process: one, we are called to be disciples; and two, we are called to be missionaries. See reverse side.

This synodal moment in the life of the Church will require honest conversation and faithful discernment. It will not be sufficient to simply catalogue a parish’s or an institution’s current ministries. A simple “yes” or “no” response will not suffice. Follow-up questions could include the following: “How do we know our response to be true?” “How is this accomplished and for whom is it accomplished?” “To whom are our efforts not being addressed?” “To what extent are our efforts in this regard effective or not effective?” “What impediments stand in our way with respect to this priority?” “What best-practices might be helpful in this regard?” “What essential capacities or resources are we lacking with respect to this priority?”

3. A Parish or Institutional Action Plan

Following the conclusion of this extended assessment, each parish and institution should develop a select set of action steps that hold promise with respect to the two priorities that emerged out of our Synod process. A three-year time horizon is recommended for this propose.

Upon completion, the results of the analysis and the discernment that ensued should be addressed in a narrative report. It should describe the consultative process employed and why it was chosen, a parish or institutional assessment *vis-à-vis* the several evaluation questions associated with each of our two diocesan priorities, and action steps. Every effort should be made to complete this process by the end of May. Additional time will be granted if needed.

Evaluation Questions for Parishes

A. Our Calling to Be Disciples

1. Are our efforts in support of young families in our parish community effective in helping them embrace the essential identity of the family as the “domestic Church”?
2. Are our efforts effective in promoting faithful participation in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist?
3. Do our faith formation programs have a lasting and life-sustaining impact?
 - On our children?
 - On adults in our parish?
4. Are we effective in engaging teenagers and young adults in every aspect of parish life, including our liturgies, our ministries, and service on our various consultative bodies?
5. Do our Catholic schools form disciples who are sustained in their faith long after their time with us?
6. Do our liturgies and our service ministries ensure that all members of our community recognize Catholic social teaching as a constitutive part of our faith and the responsibility of all of the baptized?
7. Do we have sufficient capacities in place (i.e., a well-balanced mix of ministries, well-designed programmatic strategies, faithful and effective preaching, a comprehensive mix of formation opportunities, essential communications capacity, etc.) to support initiatives that show promise with respect to the priorities noted above?
8. Are our efforts to promote stewardship (i.e., the responsible and generous use of our time, talent, and treasure) effective and sufficient with respect to the priorities noted above?
9. Are we in need of parish renewal if we are to more proactively, faithfully, and effectively pursue initiatives pertinent to the priorities indicated above?

B. Our Calling to Be Missionaries

1. Have we effectively reached out to those who have not returned to Church since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic?
2. Are we effective in welcoming those outside of our community who are seeking a relationship with Jesus?
 - Non-Catholic families?
 - Non-Catholic teenagers and young adults?
 - Seekers and the disaffected among the families we serve in our faith formation programs and in our schools?
 - Disaffected Catholics who have distanced themselves from the Church?
3. Are we effective in welcoming and embracing those who live challenging lives on the margins of society?
4. Is our Christian witness to the social teachings of the Church robust and visible to our neighbors?
5. Do we have sufficient capacities in place (i.e., a well-balanced mix of ministries, well-designed programmatic strategies, faithful and effective preaching, a comprehensive mix of formation opportunities, essential communications capacity, etc.) needed to faithfully express our shared identity as missionaries and to fulfill our responsibility to “go make disciples”?



Tuesday, May 3, 2022
Feast of Saints Philip and James

Dear Monsignor/Father:

As parishes enter ever deeper into the formation portion of their synod planning processes, questions have arisen concerning the formatting of your planning documents. To this point, I have been deliberately non-prescriptive with respect to this concern. Different circumstances may require different approaches. For instance, if a parish has elected to build significantly on its 2017 synod priorities, a relatively simple update might be sufficient. Alternately, a more robust planning document might be appropriate in parishes choosing to engage a substantial number of parish leaders or even the entire parish community.

That being said, the following design elements would seem appropriate, even if a memorandum is used for this purpose.

- As noted in a previously shared document, your report should describe the consultative process employed and why it was selected.
- A brief narrative assessment addressing each of the several evaluation questions associated with our two diocesan priorities should then follow. In most instances, a simple “yes” or “no” response would be insufficient. Some analysis or explanation will be needed.
- Finally, a series of action steps should be detailed. Best practice suggests that well-designed action steps address five distinct elements sometimes referred to as the “five Ws”: who, what, when, where, and why. The “why” question is important in this instance because it can be used to detail the link between the parish’s analysis of one or more evaluation questions and a particular action step. Again following best practice, well-designed action steps are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Although I have been receptive to requests for extensions, the established due date for your parish’s report is the end of May. Given this, you may want to consider your parish’s celebration of Pentecost on June 5 as an opportune time for sharing your parish’s action plan – or, alternately, your progress to date in this regard – with your parishioners. Engaging as many of the faithful in the implementation of our diocesan and parish action plans will undoubtedly prove critical to the long-term objective envisioned in my pastoral letter, *We Proclaim Jesus as Lord*.

Pentecost may indeed provide an ideal occasion to begin this process. A homily linking the evangelical fervor that followed the descent of the Holy Spirit to our own calling as missionary disciples could provide solid scriptural and theological grounding for the work that lies ahead for all of us.

I am thankful for your efforts to date in extending our Synod 2022 process in your parishes. I am encouraged by the anecdotal reports I have received to date, especially with respect to a number of extensive formation processes that have been employed. I am reminded on a daily basis that the work that we are now undertaking is God's work. The vineyard is his. "We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

Asking God's blessings upon you and your parishioners, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert J. McClory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small cross-like mark at the beginning.

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary