

Filled With the Holy Spirit

Archdiocesan Synodal Declaration

By Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi

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Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



SYNOD 2014
ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

Introduction

On Pentecost weekend 2014, over five hundred delegates and observers gathered together representing parishes, priests, deacons, religious communities, our seminarians, schools, institutions of higher learning and health care facilities as well as youth representatives and observers from religious denominations who have collaborated with the Catholic Church for the common good of our society. This was an opportunity to seize a providential moment in our history and — through the process of an Archdiocesan Synod — establish the pastoral priorities of our archdiocese for the coming decade and beyond.

It was evident to me at the very outset of the Synod that the energy that was present reflected God's grace in response to prayer. This was more than a mere convention or organizational process. It was a sacred moment generated through the intercessory prayers offered on our behalf. The work of the Synod was born through prayer which reflected trust in God. Therefore, the implementation of the Synod must be guided by that same confidence in following the Spirit of our Lord as we move our Church forward in the decades ahead.

I hereby accept the recommendations put forth by the delegates of the 2014 Archdiocesan Synod. I was impressed by the delegates' deep love for the Church and how well they were informed. They were concerned with helping the Church to move forward by building upon the faith of our community. The top two priorities in each of the mission areas discussed will form the blueprint for creating our pastoral vision for the next ten to fifteen years.

Theological Preamble

On the Solemnity of Pentecost in 1960, Pope St. John XXIII proclaimed, “It is in the doctrine and spirit of Pentecost that the great event of the Ecumenical Council takes its substance and life.” The nature and energy of the Church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel is the Holy Spirit, continually poured forth throughout history; He is the One who ignites, renews and energizes those to whom our Lord has entrusted His mission for the evangelization of the world. And so I felt confident in saying that the Synod of 2014 in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee would be for us a new Pentecost.

In my Pastoral Letter, “Who Do You Say That I am?” I took the question that Jesus posed to His apostles at Caesarea Philippi as the reference point for reflection on the nature of the Church as mystery, sacrament and communion. Simon responds to Jesus’ question with his profession of faith, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and thus receives a new name—Peter—and a remarkable role—he will be the rock upon which the Lord will build His Church. In proclaiming his faith in Jesus Christ as God and Messiah, Peter speaks on behalf of all believers down through the ages.

On the day of Pentecost, commissioned by the Lord Jesus to preach the Gospel to every creature and anointed by the Holy Spirit, Peter addresses the vast and divergent crowd assembled outside the upper room. In the name of the community of believers, he publically proclaims the same Kerygma—Jesus Christ is Lord and Messiah—that he professed privately to Jesus and the other apostles at Caesarea Philippi. Nevertheless, many in Jerusalem were bewildered by what the Apostles experienced at Pentecost. They were challenged by the transformation that had taken place in the upper room. Some scoffed and accused the Apostles of drinking too much wine. Peter was the one emboldened to defend the action of the Holy Spirit and profess the Faith: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38) Peter emerged from the upper room speaking for the Church, preaching the Gospel and baptizing 3000 people that day. He defended the wondrous works of God and professed his faith in the Gospel. This remains the basic formula for evangelization even today.

From Caesarea Philippi to Pentecost, Simon Peter is the unifying voice of faith who pivots from proclaiming the Church's saving belief to Jesus Himself to witnessing this truth of the Gospel to the entire world. Rightfully so, our Synod process has replicated this experience. In parish and district gatherings, the leadership and faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee reflected on their belief in Jesus Christ and the nature of the Church with each other, building each other up in faith and love. The weekend of the Synod was an energizing upper room experience of prayer and communion as the assembled delegates discerned future priorities for the archdiocese in the light of the Holy Spirit. In this moment, we now stand poised, like Simon Peter and the early Church, to go forth and witness our belief in Jesus Christ with the same passion and purpose they did on that amazing morning of Pentecost. Our implementation of the Synod will truly be an extension of Peter's courageous and efficacious witness to Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith to a vast world that speaks many languages, lives in diverse cultures and thirsts for love and peace, purpose and joy.

Vision

We confidently entrust to the Lord the future fruits of the Synod, yet we dare to dream and imagine the impact the Synod will have on the life of our beloved archdiocese. The mission of the archdiocese, as is that of the Church, is to powerfully evangelize and lead everyone into a deeper Christian discipleship and so to experience salvation through a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. The parish is the center of this evangelizing mission. We envision all of our parishes to continue growing as dynamic communities of disciples where:

- The Eucharist is celebrated with love and understood as the source and summit of our common life in Christ by an ever-increasing number of Catholics who come to Sunday Mass.
- Catholics regularly celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation, finding mercy, forgiveness and conversion.
- Our children, young people and adults are solidly formed in the beauty and truth of the Catholic faith through our schools and religious education programs.
- Catholics know and live the personal and social dimensions of Church teaching.
- Our communities are welcoming and invite people to give of their time, talent and treasure.
- Religious vocations of all types are nurtured in our young people, so there is an abundance of priests, deacons, lay ministers, religious, married couples and singles who are well formed and serving the needs of the Church and the world.
- We live a healthy and dynamic ecumenism, joining with people of other faiths and good will in prayer and service to the common good.

In light of the Synod, I propose a new mission statement for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee:

To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through his saving death and resurrection by calling, forming and sending disciples to go and make new disciples. As a people, we are called to encounter Jesus and grow as disciples through the sacramental life of the Church.

Synod Insights

In all, eight main mission areas were addressed by the delegates and observers: Liturgy, Cultural Diversity, Evangelization, Formation, Catholic Social Teaching, Marriage and Family, Stewardship and Leadership. In all of these areas, the work of the Synod focused on the need for our local Church to renew and emphasize: the desire to know about the faith (catechesis), the need to be formed (formation), and how we practice our faith (praxis).

In each mission area there was a desire for all Catholics to **know their faith (catechesis)** in order to better understand why they do what they do. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* has been a great tool in grounding our faith, but there is a need to integrate that learning in ways which allows for an intergenerational communication, with parents talking to their children in a manner that is inviting and accessible in our highly technological society. The “C4” video series produced by the archdiocese and hosted by Bishop Donald Hying is an example of informational material offered in a format that was straightforward and usable.

There is also the **desire to be formed (formation)** – the integration of doctrine into the interior life of the faithful. It is the ongoing process in the lives of all the faithful of *mystagogia*, “going deeper into the mysteries” – that is, into the truths of our faith – the suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. To be formed in the faith means that a vision of the Catholic world view is well-integrated in the lives of the faithful. This Catholic world view is embodied in one’s prayer, as well as in one’s response to family, the community and the entire world.

Our faith takes action and we are called to **“practice” the faith (praxis) - to live our faith in the world.** The Great Commission was to go preach, teach and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Christ has sent His disciples into the world. We are in need of trained and competent ministers in order for our communities to flourish and to provide needed pastoral services. Ministries are a vital and important aspect of the outreach and pastoral care of our parishes. Since Vatican II, the increase in the ministries of our Church has been a blessing to the life of our parishes. While we will continue to emphasize our ordained vocational programs and programs for religious life, it is imperative that we provide structured

educational/formational programs in lay ministries and parish administration for service to the Church. Our ordained are called to work collaboratively with lay parish staff members and those in lay ministries for the betterment of our communities.

Pastoral Priorities

What follows are the pastoral priorities I have identified in reflecting upon the Synod results. The priorities are categorized by my main goals of **Catholic Identity**, **Evangelization** and **Stewardship** as well as further distinguished by the **eight main mission areas** discussed at the Synod.

I have highlighted pastoral priorities in each area that the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Commission will consider. These priorities are based on the initiatives that were voted on at the Synod. While the top two initiatives in each area are included here, we will not overlook any of the other initiatives that were part of the Synod discussion. The complete list of Synod initiatives can be found on the archdiocesan website, www.archmil.org.

The Pastoral Priorities will be discussed in the following order:

Catholic Identity

- Liturgy
- Cultural Diversity

Evangelization

- Evangelization
- Formation
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Marriage and Family

Stewardship

- Stewardship
- Leadership

Pastoral Priorities - Catholic Identity

Liturgy

The Sunday Mass is at the heart of everything we do as Catholics. Many Catholics would like to grow in their knowledge and appreciation of the Mass. Many other Catholics do not attend Sunday Mass as regularly as they once did, but might welcome being invited back. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Place a concentrated effort on inviting Catholics to return to Mass through creating hospitable and engaging parishes that integrate quality preaching, good music and well trained liturgical ministries.
- Commit to using and developing engaging resources to teach about the Mass and devotions.
- Focus on the sacrament of reconciliation through the, “He is Waiting” initiative in the archdiocese.
- Provide formation and opportunities for diverse types of popular piety including, but not limited to, Eucharistic Adoration; Eucharistic processions; the holy rosary; the Divine Mercy Chaplet; *lectio divina* (meditation on sacred Scripture and prayerful spiritual reading); charismatic prayer; Marian devotions (Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of La Vang among others) and liturgical season celebrations-such as novenas, *Las Posadas*, *Simbang Gabi*, and *Via Crucis*-Way of the Cross.

First Priority – 34% – Mass Teaching Resources

Through new, high-engaging resources, make teaching about the Mass – its structure, symbolism and meaning – a top priority in all parish and school formation programs, children through adults.

Second Priority – 29% – Weekend Music, Message and Ministries

Direct our primary attention and strategic efforts to the weekend so that the music, message and ministries form a high-impact, integrated evangelizing message of Good News, especially to the lost and seekers.

Pastoral Priorities - Catholic Identity

Cultural Diversity

Diversity is integral to the Church's identity and mission to "go forth and baptize all nations." The growing diversity in Church and society calls us to understand and embrace the gifts of various cultures. A number of parishes already share cultures and more will in the future. The Bishops' Conference calls them "shared parishes." In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Develop an awareness at all parishes to become welcoming communities which embrace cultural diversity.
- Offer training for parish staffs and leaders that will build an awareness of and appreciation for working with various cultures in "shared parishes."
- Determine ways for the bishops and other leaders to give greater voice and action to those social justice issues which significantly impact the cultural minorities in the archdiocese.
- Establish guidelines and a process for parishes to share cultural and religious traditions along with other resources with other parishes in order to enrich and strengthen both communities.

First Priority – 22% – Bishops Involved in Social Justice

Demonstrate our Archdiocese's concern for issues impacting wide segments of our society through the strong and consistent leadership, involvement and visibility from the bishops in areas of social justice, especially on issues like poverty, immigration and gun violence.

Second Priority – 21% – Sharing Parish Process

Develop a comprehensive process to pair diverse/less diverse parishes and guide them in building respectful and mutually beneficial "sharing parish" relationships with concrete opportunities for the ongoing sharing of culture and religious traditions, professional expertise, technology and financial resources.

Pastoral Priorities - Evangelization

Evangelization

Evangelization is at the heart of the Synod and is related to each of the areas examined by the delegates. This stems from the fact that evangelization is at the very heart of the Church. Evangelization is not simply one of many activities conducted by Christ's Church, but, in fact, her very reason for being, "her deepest identity" (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 14). In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Equip leaders throughout the archdiocese to exercise inspiring and effective missionary leadership for the new evangelization.
- Implement new and creative strategies to form and strengthen Catholic identity in marriages, families, parishes and schools.
- Establish District Evangelization Councils to network around best practices and share resources for increased reach and impact.
- Utilize and maximize all current and emerging technologies for proclaiming the Gospel and promoting Catholic identity.

First Priority – 23% – Leadership Training Process

Implement a "Strategic Leadership Training Process" to train archdiocesan staff, seminarians, priests, deacons, school principals, parish staffs and parish leaders in the vision, process, methods and skills of "Missionary Leadership for the New Evangelization."

Second Priority – 22% – Catholic Identity Faith Formation

Implement a creative and strategic process in parishes and schools for building Catholic identity and forming people and families in the essentials of the Catholic faith.

Pastoral Priorities - Evangelization

Formation

Formation is the integration of doctrine into the interior life of the faithful. To be formed in the faith is an ongoing process of interior conversion and ultimately takes place in the context of the life of Church, the sacraments and a life of personal prayer. The Synod has called for a renewal in Christian formation throughout the archdiocese, touching on something that takes place in every parish, every school and every program or initiative for religious education throughout our local Church. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Support and strengthen efforts that provide faith formation training for all Catholic school teachers and parish catechists.
- Help parishes become centers of quality formation by offering skills training for leaders, resources based on best practices and assessment tools for their adult, youth and children's programming.
- Provide formation opportunities for adults, especially parents and grandparents, to help them grow in their faith, to live lives of discipleship, and to be able to pass the Catholic faith on to their children.
- Help parishes re-ignite their youth ministry efforts by providing local training for adults, assisting with inter-parish collaborations and co-sponsoring regional youth events.
- Increase opportunities for young adults to learn about the Catholic faith, celebrate the Catholic faith through the Mass, sacraments and devotions and relate their faith to their life situations.

First Priority – 26% – Universal, Quality Faith Formation

Ensure that ALL parishes and schools in the archdiocese have access to excellent quality formation for children, youth and adults.

Second Priority – 20% – Young Adult Opportunities

Offer meaningful, relevant and compelling opportunities for young adults that relate faith to their life situations.

Pastoral Priorities - Evangelization

Catholic Social Teaching

As Christians we are called like the Good Samaritan to care for our neighbor. There is a responsibility to help those in need. The many ways that we can help are described in Catholic social teaching. More Catholics need to become aware of and practice these teachings. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Support and strengthen efforts to provide direct services to those in need.
- Design a multi-generational formation effort for use by individuals, parishes and schools which will present the principles and practices of Catholic social teaching.
- Encourage the creation or expansion of service opportunities and invite more people to become involved in this work of the Church.
- Collaborate with other Catholic agencies to improve services and to more effectively respond to the human needs within the archdiocese.

First Priority – 31% - Multigenerational Catholic Social Teaching Formation

Develop and implement multigenerational formation on Catholic social teaching that includes catechesis, advocacy and service.

Second Priority – 24% - Coordinated Response to Social Issues

Provide a strong, coordinated Catholic response in relation to social issues in our communities in the archdiocese.

Pastoral Priorities - Evangelization

Marriage and Family

There have been significant changes in cultural realities facing married couples and families. Fewer people have a true understanding of marriage and family in our society. The union of husband and wife stands as a sign of Christ's enduring love and covenant with His Church. Every baptized person is called to be an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ and to proclaim the Gospel. This is not only true of individuals, but also of couples and families. While this task may seem daunting, the Church, through the sacraments, provides married couples and families with the grace and resources to be evangelizers to each other, and the world. The family is a "domestic church" in which parents are the first and primary teachers of the faith. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Develop strategies to help families with the "busyness" of family life and ways to strengthen their focus on the importance of faith in their families.
- Implement new, creative and effective strategies that evangelize to, and provide support for engaged and married couples both at the parish and archdiocesan levels.
- Launch a comprehensive multi-generational (child, youth, teen, young adult, adult) effort to teach a true, Catholic understanding of the human person.
- Expand pastoral programs and resources for the care of couples and families, especially those who struggled with troubled marriages, single parent families, those who have experienced divorce, families with mixed religious traditions and couples dealing with infertility.

First Priority – 30% – Building Catholic Families Campaign

Implement a "Building Catholic Families" campaign that includes practical, user-friendly strategies for families to strength and practice their Catholic identity in a culture of "busyness" and family disintegration.

Second Priority – 18% – Support for Engaged and Married

Implement new, creative and effective strategies that provide support at the parish and archdiocesan levels for engaged and married couples.

Pastoral Priorities - Stewardship

Stewardship

The call to follow Jesus and become a disciple is a call to community. We share and build the community through our gifts of time, talent and treasure. Parishes need to become more focused on welcoming new members, helping them discern and use their gifts to build the Kingdom and sharing their financial resources. Many Catholics do not seem to realize that stewardship is a response to discipleship. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Recommend that every parish or cluster establish a stewardship commission or committee to carry out this area of mission.
- Offer training and resources to parish leaders on various aspects of the mission of stewardship.
- Design multi-generational programs on the theology and practice of stewardship which can be used in parishes and schools.
- Provide a forum for parishes to share their stewardship “best practices” and resources with other parishes.

First Priority – 27% - Training for Parish Action Groups

Develop educational programming and materials to train small outreach/stewardship/evangelization action groups in every parish to focus on internal and external invitation and engagement.

Second Priority – 23% - Multi-Generational Programs

Develop multi-generational programming on the theology of stewardship that incorporates events and service components.

Pastoral Priorities - Stewardship

Leadership

The Synod delegates recognized and supported the continuation of opportunities for leadership development. The ministry of priests was acknowledged as essential to the ongoing life of the Church. The important ministry of service provided by deacons was also recognized. The Synod raised up lay leadership in the local Church as being of great significance. It was proposed that priestly ministry be more focused on pastoral and spiritual responsibilities than on administrative tasks and that other models of parish administration be developed. Permanent deacons are being called upon to assume additional parish and leadership responsibilities and ministerial functions. In light of these realities, we as an archdiocese will:

- Review the proposed plan for lay ecclesial ministry, to make recommendations about implementing any or all of it, and to propose a timeline for adopting the plan as normative for the archdiocese.
- Study emerging models of parish administration that are consistent with our Catholic traditions and laws, and make recommendations about proposed models that could reduce the administrative burden on priests.
- Further study of recommended models to be conducted by a joint committee of the Archdiocesan Council of Priests and Archdiocesan Pastoral Council and a final proposal prepared for my consideration.
- Propose a plan for reviewing diaconal formation to determine if any adjustments to the program will help enhance it and help prepare deacons for new areas of administrative leadership.

First Priority – 26% – Form Lay Leaders

Support, train and form qualified lay ecclesial ministers (paid church positions) in service to the Church, with an emphasis on developing leadership roles, especially for women.

Second Priority – 25% – Reduce Administration for Priests

Lessen administrative load of priests so they can focus on pastoral and spiritual responsibilities.

Current Pastoral Initiatives

There are current strategic initiatives that have been established for the good of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee prior to the Synod. As was noted for Synod delegates, it is important that these initiatives remain part of the pastoral and ministerial fabric of the archdiocese because these programs and initiatives serve specific segments of our archdiocese. It is essential, then, that they incorporate the priorities of the Synod into the scope of their ministries and integration of the Synod priorities into these initiatives will enhance the effectiveness of Synod implementation. These initiatives include:

Safeguarding All of God's Children

One of the most visible and important efforts of the archdiocese is to protect our children, youth and all in the Church family from any type of abuse or mistreatment, especially sexual abuse. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee remains committed to providing and maintaining safe environments for all children and youth. To build and strengthen this commitment, I am asking that a new and updated curriculum be introduced in our classrooms and religious education programs in 2015. Continuing education and awareness for adults remains a priority as well and so I ask that a new program of education and awareness be introduced for adult training within the year. These safe environment initiatives remain a requirement for all parishes and schools. The children and youth of today are our future, and it is our moral obligation to do everything in our power to be good shepherds and to remain vigilant in their protection.

Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Catholic Schools integrate faith development with educational excellence. During recent years, one strategic initiative has focused on the regionalization of schools in a number of locations as a way to reduce administrative overhead, while maintaining academic excellence and increasing enrollment. I would ask the Office for Schools to continue to focus on strengthening and building sustainability for Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee through the creation of regional models. A comprehensive assessment of Catholic Schools in Milwaukee, called "Light for the Future," has been completed. Based on this assessment, I will appoint an ad hoc task force to develop a governance model for the Catholic schools in the region of Milwaukee County that will systematize their approach to Catholic identity, academic quality, leadership, finance, facilities, technology and operations.

Hispanic Ministry

Hispanics represent the fastest growing ethnic group in the archdiocese, with 33 parishes having a focused Hispanic ministry. The Archdiocesan Plan for Hispanic Ministry looks at the realities of parishes serving Hispanic Catholics. This plan reflects upon what is being done and what needs to be expanded. It identifies priorities and provides strategies for parishes. Therefore, I would ask that this plan serve as our guiding document in expanding Hispanic ministry in the archdiocese and promoting full participation and integration of the Hispanic faithful in the life of the Church.

Black Catholic Ministry

The first Black Catholic Pastoral Plan was developed in 1989, partly as a result of the 1987 Archdiocesan Synod. Now, building upon that work and as a result of the 2014 Archdiocesan Synod, it is my sincerest desire to see Black Catholic ministry grow and flourish in our archdiocese. Therefore, I am asking that Auxiliary Bishop Donald Hying continue serving as my delegate to the Black Catholic community and participate in a process to develop a Pastoral Plan to guide the Church in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in this vital ministry. This planning should take into account the diversity within the Black Catholic community, the contributions of Black Catholic leaders and theologians; and key insights and priorities developed by the National Black Catholic Congress. The planning should be comprehensive and involve the Black Catholic Ministry Commission, pastors of parishes with Black Catholic members, religious orders and other groups that minister to the Black Catholic community, and other leaders in the Black Catholic community, with a goal of having a Pastoral Plan of Action for use on the archdiocesan and parish level.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry Advisory Council has begun work on a plan to guide pastoral ministry that is responsive to the needs and gifts of the Deaf Catholic community and their families. Therefore, I ask that work on this Plan be finalized for approval and implementation and that the Archdiocese of Milwaukee become a model for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry, particularly in the area of evangelization, pastoral care and formation.

Asian Pacific Ministry

Realizing the vital importance of Asian Catholics for the Church at large, the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs of the USCCB has initiated work towards a plan for Asian Pacific Ministry at the national level. Echoing the same pastoral concern, I would ask that we continue participating in this planning effort and engage our Asian Pacific Ministry Advisory Council and others in devising a pastoral plan that responds to the needs of the many Asian Pacific communities in our archdiocese.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

During the Archdiocesan Synod we were blessed with the attendance of many of our ecumenical and interfaith brothers and sisters who attended the Synod as observers. Jesus shares with us his prayer and we adopt it as our own: “That all may be one” (John 17:21). Therefore, to continue the long history of relationships with our Christian sisters and brothers, as well as those of other faith traditions, I ask that the archdiocese continue its involvement and leadership role in the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and we engage with the wider interfaith community in service and education to promote peace, harmony and understanding.

Parish Planning

Vibrant and viable parishes are the foundation of Catholic life in the archdiocese and the place where most Catholics experience and connect with the Church. Therefore, I would ask that our parish planning efforts continue with a renewed and comprehensive effort on parish planning. Our current pastoral planning and future pastoral planning must encompass the entire Archdiocese of Milwaukee and address the current and future realities of priest and lay personnel; priest and lay leadership, facilities, pastoral and sacramental care, financial viability and other pastoral needs. Planning should be ongoing and dynamic, examining new and creative pastoral and administrative models for parish leadership that utilize the unique gifts of various pastoral leaders. Building upon the comprehensive parish planning of 1997 and continuing the recommendations of the Vision 2020 Pastoral Plan, I would ask that this parish planning continue and be incorporated into the pastoral, spiritual and administrative practices of the archdiocese, including priest placement assignments.

Vocations

Our primary vocation, for each of us as baptized Catholic believers, is a shared vocation, namely, to be holy. Therefore it is necessary for us to create an environment through which individuals may fulfill their God-given call. In that sense, we would encourage all parishes and schools to collaborate with the Vocations Office of the archdiocese so that the invitation to respond to God's call through the priesthood is supported. The role of the permanent deacon has been a significant contribution in the post-Vatican II Church and we encourage continued promotion of the diaconate. Likewise, we have all benefitted from competent professional lay ministers within the archdiocese, such as parish directors, pastoral associates and other lay ecclesial ministers. Increasing the access to ministerial roles within the parishes and the archdiocese is important in serving the needs of the People of God. We encourage all parishes and institutions to collaborate with the offices of the archdiocese in promoting, educating and certifying ministerial roles for service in the Church. I would ask that every parish and school renew its own discussion of vocations, using the Archdiocesan K-12 Catechetical Vocation Program as a way of helping Catholics understand their vocation as part of their Catholic identity.

Suggestions for Consideration

The Archdiocesan Synod was a result of comprehensive planning and prayerful preparation. Implementation of the Synod recommendations will be the result of our deliberate focus on the voice of the delegates representing the faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Being part of the Synod preparation, the Synod event and reviewing the Synod results gave me a good perspective on the recommendations on priorities for the Church in southeastern Wisconsin.

In reflecting upon the Synod results, I have the following observations that, although not directly related to some of the priorities Synod Delegates voted upon, may need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the Synod priorities.

As such, I put forth the following items for consideration by the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Commission and other consultative bodies of the archdiocese as we move forward with Synod implementation.

Districts/Deaneries

Currently, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is organized into 15 districts, which provide an administrative structure for parishes and priest personnel. Each district has a District Dean who serves as an extension of my own ministry to priests and parish directors within a district. My experience over the past for and a half years is that this structure may be too cumbersome. I would ask that consideration be given to “redistricting” the archdiocese with the goal of reducing the number of districts to 10 or 12, with a goal of streamlining communication and effectively grouping parish sites for better collaboration.

Devotional Groups

Through the years, a variety of prayerful devotional groups have emerged in the archdiocese. These groups provide men and women, youth and adults, a variety of opportunities to develop their spirituality, faith and prayer lives. The groups have been a blessing in their promotion of personal devotion and prayer. As a way of soliciting spiritual support of the Synod priorities and their implementation, I would suggest a summit of the various devotional groups be convened.

Fraternal Groups

The archdiocese has many organizational groups that promote and foster the Catholic faith for evangelical, charitable and fraternal causes. I would welcome a general meeting of these groups with the purpose of seeking ways that these various organizations might work together to incorporate, support and contribute to the effective implementation of the Synod priorities through their own network of members and supporters.

Communication and Technology

Throughout the Synod, we listened to the expressed need for better communication, more deliberate use of modern communication methods and vehicles, and the need for the Church to be involved with the latest technology for communication purposes, as a way of effectively communicating the Gospel message in today's culture. This seems particularly necessary for evangelization, but also for effective administration.

As such, I would ask that the Implementation Commission recommend the appointment of a Technology and Communications task force that would assist the archdiocese and parishes in integrating technology into our communication methods, examining both technology and software to identify the most effective and efficient ways for the archdiocese to connect with parishes and schools, and for the Church to connect with the people of the archdiocese.

Archdiocesan Logo

Prior to the Archdiocesan Synod, a logo was developed to give the Synod a distinctive mark. As a way of symbolizing our commitment to implementation of the Synod Priorities, I would ask that this Synod Logo be adapted to become the Archdiocesan logo, including visual references to the Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This logo will represent the Catholic Church in southeastern Wisconsin and my hope would be that all Catholic parishes, schools and institutions would use this logo in some way to identify themselves with the Catholic mission and, by doing so, become a symbol for the Catholic Church's presence within our community through its worship, teaching, charity, education and service.

Archdiocesan Pastoral Center

Entrusting the work of our archdiocesan Synod to Mary, Mother of Christ, I am asking that we consider dedicating our pastoral center to the name of Mary, Mother of the Church. In this way, we honor Mary, Mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Implementation of Pastoral Priorities

This Synodal Declaration constitutes a vision for pastoral renewal throughout the archdiocese that will span the next decade and beyond. Therefore, we must proceed in a systematic, incremental and coordinated fashion. The way forward will be monitored and facilitated by the members of the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Commission (hereinafter ASIC), which I also constitute by this document. Like the Synod Preparatory Commission, ASIC will consist of clergy, religious and lay faithful who are distinguished by their pastoral prudence and by their professional competence and who, in so far as possible, reflect the various charisms and ministries of the People of God. They will work in collaboration with parishes, parish clusters, districts and archdiocesan offices and personnel. They will serve as an oversight commission evaluating the implementation of the Synod priorities and holding us accountable for implementing the priorities of the Synod. I am also appointing an Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Director who will be accountable to me and serve as the ASIC chair.

The implementation of the Synodal priorities demands the participation of everyone in the archdiocese. The work of the Synod cannot nor, should not, be merely the work of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center staff. Instead every parish, institution, school, hospital and individual should be involved to the extent their position, programs and status in life permits. It is important that we go forward working together, claiming these priorities and acknowledging the work of the Synod. It will be the task of the ASIC to discover opportunities for all to be involved. The energy of the Synod was reflected in the spirit of those delegates and observers who gathered. It

is this same spirit that will ignite us to become better informed and more active Catholics.

During the many months leading up to the Synod, and even following it, ongoing communication was essential. The Synod Preparatory Commission and Synod Secretariat established a network of contacts for imparting important information. The Synod parish delegates and the parish contacts were essential members of this communication network. Because of the investment in the Synod that they have already made, I am inviting Synod parish delegates and contact persons to continue serving as the recipients, along with pastors, administrators and parish directors, of ongoing information regarding the implementation of the Synod initiatives. Of course, anyone for whom this ongoing task is not possible or feasible, is not obliged to continue. In such cases, pastors, administrators and parish directors are to provide the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Director with updated contact information.

Conclusion

I call upon all the leaders and faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to join me in prayer, love, zeal and witness as we ardently strive to implement the pastoral initiatives of the Synod. We may feel daunted by the enormous task before us; we may feel discouraged by the challenges and difficulties we face, both within the Church and in our society, but like Peter and the early Church, we have received the Great Commission to evangelize every creature under heaven and we have been anointed by the Holy Spirit. Like the Apostles on the glorious morning of Pentecost, we courageously open the door of the upper room and boldly proclaim Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, as the new meaning of human history.

I entrust all of the endeavors and fruit of the Synod to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who gave birth to the Word, along with St. John the Evangelist, they stood at the foot of the Cross. They led the Church in prayer when the Holy Spirit descended in flame and wind at Pentecost.

Given on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 14, 2014.

In gratitude for all that God will accomplish through us,

The Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecki
Archbishop of Milwaukee