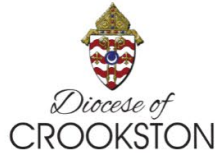




New Life

Through the Tender Compassion of Our God



PLANNING FOR MISSION: LEADERSHIP FORMATION FOR PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

PRINCIPLES FOR A MISSIONARY CHURCH Discernment Guide

In the *New Life Through the Tender Compassion of Our God* pastoral letter, Bishop Cozzens repeats the appeal by the Second Vatican Council for the Church to “claim her missionary identity.” Pope Francis, in his letter on evangelization, *Evangelii Gaudium*, describes the heart of this missionary identity in this way:

I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world, rather than for her self-preservation.
(*Evangelii Gaudium*, 27)

The challenge before each parish, and cluster of parishes, is to discern how the Lord continues to call them on mission in this new day and age. With increasing numbers of people not identifying with any religion, and an even greater number of people who have left the Catholic Church, rather than resigning ourselves to decline, we see this as a great opportunity to evangelize. Moving from a “maintenance” mindset to one that is focused on “mission” will require us to reflect on how we are called to change our “customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures” for the evangelization of the people who live in our parish boundaries. We want each parish to discern how to create an effective culture of evangelization that forms intentional disciples, builds vibrant community, and inspires witness.

To do this we are asking leadership to be formed in a set of principles for this mission. Leaders, working with their pastors, will be asked to consider how to apply these principles in the context of their parish life.

Human nature, when presented with a task, typically begins with a group of people gathered in “brainstorming” or “envisioning” sessions. In contrast,



this guide, modeled on the *Spiritual Exercises for Collective Discernment* from Acts XXIX (actsxxxix.org), is meant to be used by parish leaders to engage in prayer before planning action steps. It is based on the premise that we *Pray to know what to do, not merely before doing something* (Acts XXIX).

This guide is not meant to only provide a format for your parish leadership team to engage in prayerful discernment, it is also meant to teach the team the process for prayerful discernment so that the leadership group can facilitate a prayerful planning process for the whole parish.

We offer three formation sessions for your parish leaders. Each of the three sessions outlined in this document follow the same format.

1. Opening prayer and Scripture reading.
2. A presentation on a missionary principle flowing from the *New Life* pastoral letter (Video is accessed on the diocesan website.)
3. 30 minutes of Adoration guided by reflection questions.
4. 30 minutes of sharing of the fruits from this time in adoration.
5. Conclusion and Final Prayer

Each session is expected to last about 90 minutes and parishes are encouraged to complete this discernment process before developing specific plans for becoming a mission-centered parish. We want to come before the Lord with humility and faith, asking him to help us discern the best way forward for our parish to engage in his mission.



Session 1: Authentic Discipleship

Part 1: Opening prayer.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, pour forth your Holy Spirit. Stir in our souls the desire to know your Son Jesus Christ more deeply, so that we might receive the fullness of life he desires for us. Open our hearts to hear the Gospel and grant us the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others. Pour out your Spirit on us, so that we might be strengthened to live as authentic missionary disciples who witness to your life changing love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Part 2: Reflection based on the *New Life* pastoral letter.

The topic for this session is:

Authentic Discipleship

Go to <https://www.crookston.org/planningformissionresources> to access a video presentation by Bishop Andrew Cozzens on Authentic Discipleship.



Part 3. Reading & Adoration.

You will now enter a time of prayer in Eucharistic Adoration. It will be helpful to bring this booklet and a pen to capture what the Lord reveals. Spend at least 30 minutes in silent prayer together. Have someone read the Scripture passage found below or ask that each person begin their time in prayer reading the passage. Seek to be attentive to *what* the Lord reveals and *how* he reveals. Below the reading you will find some prayer prompts based on the session's reflection. Read through these prompts and consider reflecting on a few of them.

Luke 5:1-11

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were



washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything* and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord

1. Put yourself in God’s presence and imagine the scene. What do you notice? Can you imagine what Peter felt when he saw the miraculous catch of fish and realized he was before God?



2. Describe an experience when you encountered the love of Jesus in your life.

3. Have I ever felt what Peter said, "Leave me Lord I'm a sinful man"? How does Jesus see me in that moment? How might I make the Sacrament of Confession more a part of my life?

Part 4: Sharing the fruits from this time in adoration.

You will now share the graces received in prayer. Depending on the number of people you may want to split up into groups of 4 or 5 to give people more chance to share.

- Please listen attentively to each other
- Note that the Lord is still going to be speaking, but now through one another.
- Let one person speak at a time without interruption.
- Each person should share what they heard or felt during prayer.
- Remember that the goal is not to share opinions, but what a person senses the Lord saying. It is okay to make mistakes and take risks in



this, the Holy Spirit will work through each other as we share. Try to start by sharing your own personal experience of the Lord. Be mindful to avoid statements beginning with “I think...” or “What we need to do is...”

Try to keep the focus away from action steps or brainstorming. That process will best come after the completion of the next two discernment sessions on the Principles for a Missionary Church.

Part 5: Conclusion and Final prayer

This concludes the first of three discernment sessions on the Principles for a Missionary Church.

The concluding prayer was written by Bishop Cozzens, asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the *New Life* pastoral plan — within each of us, our parish(es), and in every parish across the Diocese of Crookston.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Let us Pray:

Dearest Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, you came to our world at a time of great difficulty and darkness, when the people of the Americas needed to know the love and mercy of your Son. You revealed his love and compassion for all peoples. You called them out of darkness into his own wonderful light. You showed us your compassion when you said to Saint Juan Diego, “Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you.”

We know you desire that all people come to know the saving love of your Son Jesus Christ, and that all would enter his Church and live as his Children. Inspire us, confident in your intercession, to find ways to reveal his love to those most in need in our communities. Through your intercession and with you as our strength and guide, make us also true missionary disciples.

May we invite everyone we meet to new life through the tender compassion of our God.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for us!



Session 2: The Essential Role of Discernment and Prayer for Mission

Part 1: Opening prayer.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, pour forth your Holy Spirit. Stir in our souls the desire to know your Son Jesus Christ more deeply, so that we might receive the fullness of life he desires for us. Open our hearts to hear the Gospel and grant us the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others. Pour out your Spirit on us, so that we might be strengthened to live as authentic missionary disciples who witness to your life changing love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Part 2: Reflection based on the *New Life* pastoral letter.

The topic for this session is:

The Essential Role of Discernment and Prayer for Mission



Go to <https://www.crookston.org/planningformissionresources> to access a video presentation by Fr. Tom Niehaus on the essential role of discernment and prayer for mission.

Part 3. Reading & Adoration.

You will now enter a time of prayer in Eucharistic Adoration. It will be helpful to bring this booklet and a pen to capture what the Lord reveals. Spend at least 30 minutes in silent prayer together. Have someone read the Scripture passage found below or ask that each person begin their time in prayer reading the passage. Seek to be attentive to *what* the Lord reveals and *how* he reveals. Below the reading you will find some prayer prompts based on the session's reflection. Read through these prompts and consider reflecting on a few of them.

Luke 11:9-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke



“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If

you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

The Gospel of the Lord

1. As you read and pray with this Scripture passage, what has been happening in your heart? How is the Lord speaking to you through this Scripture passage?

2. What is it about planning for mission that brings you peace, consolation, or excitement?



3. What is it about planning for mission that causes you anxiety, fear, or agitation?

With the remaining time speak to the Lord about those things which bring you peace, consolation or excitement as well as those things which cause anxiety, fear, or agitation.

Part 4: Small group sharing the fruits from this time in adoration.

You will now share the graces received in prayer. Depending on the number of people you may want to split up into groups of 4 or 5 to give people more chance to share.

- Please listen attentively to each other
- Note that the Lord is still going to be speaking, but now through one another.
- Let one person speak at a time without interruption.
- Each person should share what they heard or felt during prayer.
- Remember that the goal is not to share opinions, but what a person senses the Lord saying. It is okay to make mistakes and take risks in this, the Holy Spirit will work through each other as we share. Try to start by sharing your own personal experience of the Lord. Be mindful to avoid statements beginning with “I think...” or “What we need to do is...”

Try to keep the focus away from action steps or brainstorming. That process will best come after completion of all the discernment sessions on the Principles for a Missionary Church.



Part 5: Conclusion and Final prayer

This concludes the second of three discernment sessions on the Principles for a Missionary Church.

The concluding prayer was written by Bishop Cozzens, asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the *New Life* pastoral plan — within each of us, our parish(es), and in every parish across the Diocese of Crookston.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Let us Pray:

Dearest Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, you came to our world at a time of great difficulty and darkness, when the people of the Americas needed to know the love and mercy of your Son. You revealed his love and compassion for all peoples. You called them out of darkness into his own wonderful light. You showed us your compassion when you said to Saint Juan Diego, “Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you.”

We know you desire that all people come to know the saving love of your Son Jesus Christ, and that all would enter his Church and live as his Children. Inspire us, confident in your intercession, to find ways to reveal his love to those most in need in our communities. Through your intercession and with you as our strength and guide, make us also true missionary disciples.

May we invite everyone we meet to new life through the tender compassion of our God.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for us!



Session 3: Mission-Centered Parishes

Part 1: Opening prayer.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, pour forth your Holy Spirit. Stir in our souls the desire to know your Son Jesus Christ more deeply, so that we might receive the fullness of life he desires for us. Open our hearts to hear the Gospel and grant us the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others. Pour out your Spirit on us, so that we might be strengthened to live as authentic missionary disciples who witness to your life changing love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Part 2: Reflection based on the *New Life* pastoral letter.

The topic for this session is:

Becoming a Mission-Centered Parish

Go to <https://www.crookston.org/planningformissionresources> to access a video presentation by Deacon Mark Krejci on Becoming a Mission-Centered Parish.



Part 3. Reading & Adoration.

You will now enter a time of prayer, ideally a time of Eucharistic Adoration. It will be helpful to bring this booklet and a pen to capture what the Lord reveals. Spend at least 30 minutes in silent prayer together. Have someone read the Scripture passage found below or ask that each person begin their time in prayer reading the passage. Seek to be attentive to *what* the Lord reveals and *how* he reveals. Below the reading you will find some prayer prompts based on the session's reflection. Read through these prompts and consider reflecting on a few of them.

Romans 10:11-15

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans:

For the Scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same



Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!”

The Word of the Lord

1. Think of a time your Catholic faith brought you hope, joy, satisfaction, or love. Remember what that is like and ask the Lord how you might share this with someone who needs it. How might your parish provide opportunities for this for others?

2. Write down here the feelings you have when you think about accompanying others into a deeper relationship with Jesus. Speak to Jesus about those feelings. How might your parish support you to accompany others?



3. Of the things that Dcn. Mark described as reflective of a mission-centered parish, what is one thing you feel called to help with?

Part 4: Small group sharing the fruits from this time in adoration.

You will now share the graces received in prayer. Depending on the number of people you may want to split up into groups of 4 or 5 to give people more chance to share.

- Please listen attentively to each other
- Note that the Lord is still going to be speaking, but now through one another.
- Let one person speak at a time without interruption.
- Each person should share what they heard or felt during prayer.
- Remember that the goal is not to share opinions, but what a person senses the Lord saying. It is okay to make mistakes and take risks in this, the Holy Spirit will work through each other as we share. Try to start by sharing your own personal experience of the Lord. Be mindful to avoid statements beginning with “I think...” or “What we need to do is...”

Try to keep the focus away from action steps or brainstorming. That process will best come after the completion of the discernment sessions.

Part 5: Conclusion and Final prayer

This concludes the final discernment sessions on the Principles for a Missionary Church.

The concluding prayer was written by Bishop Cozzens, asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the *New Life* pastoral plan —



within each of us, our parish(es), and in every parish across the Diocese of Crookston.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Let us Pray:

Dearest Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, you came to our world at a time of great difficulty and darkness, when the people of the Americas needed to know the love and mercy of your Son. You revealed his love and compassion for all peoples. You called them out of darkness into his own wonderful light. You showed us your compassion when you said to Saint Juan Diego, “Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you.”

We know you desire that all people come to know the saving love of your Son Jesus Christ, and that all would enter his Church and live as his Children. Inspire us, confident in your intercession, to find ways to reveal his love to those most in need in our communities. Through your intercession and with you as our strength and guide, make us also true missionary disciples.

May we invite everyone we meet to new life through the tender compassion of our God.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for us!

You have prayed this prayer at the conclusion of these three sessions. You are now invited to pray this prayer every day so that you, your parish, and all people in the boundaries of the Diocese of Crookston may experience *New Life through the Tender Compassion of our God.*