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INTO THE DEEP

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**The Current Reality & Future of the Local Church:
Diocese of Madison takes next step in “daunting, necessary,
but hope-filled task of recalibrating our resources to [better] match the mission of Jesus”**

Madison, Wisconsin, after spending several months collecting and analyzing thousands of data points, the Diocese of Madison has released and is sharing its *Current Reality Report* with the priests, leaders, and faithful of the diocese as the next step of the *Into the Deep* strategic planning process. *Into the Deep*, [launched in late April](#), is aimed at reimagining diocesan structures and realigning resources for the sake of mission. The Current Reality Report spells out with great clarity and insight the challenges, strengths, and opportunities the diocese faces both now and into the future.

In particular, there are 8 key takeaways from the Current Reality Report:

- The total population across the Diocese of Madison is growing;
- People are leaving the practice of the faith, especially younger people; and the Catholic population is aging;
- Fewer and fewer people are attending Mass;
- Significantly fewer people are receiving Sacraments;
- Faith Formation enrollment is significantly declining, while Catholic School enrollment is holding relatively steady;
- There are significantly fewer priests than in the past, but this number projects to be relatively stable into the future;
- Donors to the Church give about 2% of their income; with fewer older people giving more these days; and
- At present, the diocese and its institutions are facing financial challenges impacting both mission and employees.

Given all of this, the question before the entire diocese is what to do to disrupt and reverse these troubling trends? Or, as Bishop Hying has phrased it, what is an appropriate bold new model which will help us to accomplish “this daunting, necessary, but hope-filled task of recalibrating our resources to [better] match the mission of Jesus Christ?”

The next phase of *Into the Deep* will be to develop a new model of parish structures and life – through collaboration and consultation with both clergy and laity – that helps us to build a brighter future and to accomplish the goals set forth by Bishop Hying at the outset of this initiative, including:

- Coming together to follow Jesus Christ as a community of missionary disciples;
- Renewing the Local Church/Diocese to make it more vibrant and healthy;
- Reclaiming Sunday, so as to increase Mass attendance and participation in the other sacraments;
- Evangelizing others and helping them come to know the infinite love of Jesus Christ;
- Engaging young people and forming them as followers of Jesus;
- Equipping leaders to better live and share the life-changing good news of Jesus with others;
- Serving those in need more effectively through the practice of the works of mercy; and
- Freeing up time, energy, and resources for our ongoing evangelization efforts throughout the Diocese of Madison.

In the coming weeks the diocese will be seeking input and feedback from the public/lay faithful as a bold new model is developed and refined so that we might move our institutions from maintenance to mission for the sake of these goals.

For more information and to stay up to date with this effort please visit: www.intothedepmadison.org

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