

Strategic Plan Initial Information From Bishop Joensen

This Pentecost, the pulse of the Holy Spirit guiding the Diocese of Des Moines quickens as we implement the mission and vision we believe God has bestowed on us.

This pivotal moment comes after over three years of listening to one another, praying, identifying strategic priorities, and crafting concrete means of realizing our Mission. Overall, we have humbly opened ourselves to what God's will asks of us. We are a people of faith who recognize there are many among us still searching for God in central and southwest Iowa. Our considerable investment of spiritual resources, human inspiration and practical wisdom is a labor of love for God and our neighbors. I personally believe with all my heart that God anoints this bold venture of faith and mutual accompaniment with his Holy Spirit—the same Spirit that came down upon those gathered together at the first Pentecost.

I am pleased to share with you the fruits of this concerted listening, learning, mutual respect, and transparency. We are offering our parishes a bundled “basket” with an array of resources and a proposed means of engagement. This basket of the Spirit's fruits is served up to our parish leaders and persons of all ages living out their baptismal call to grow faith and deepen their connection with Jesus Christ and one another—including each of us, I hope!

Our Strategic Mission and Vision

Like Jesus himself, who often spoke in parables using images drawn from the ordinary experiences of people and nature, the harmony of Scripture and our own local diocesan culture—with the sense of the faithful, the signs of our own times, and a strong unifying ethos of agriculture—contribute well to our guiding mission and vision: “Sowing God's Spirit: Cultivating Connections in Christ through Encounter, Friendship, and Communion.”

The six toolkits in this bundled “basket” are a robust collective resource correlated with our six identified diocesan strategic priorities. Together, they beckon for patient and selective discernment and deliberation by each of our parishes. In no way are the toolkits and the visioning process intended to be a top-down mandate from on high, let alone a theoretical ‘program’ from me, your Bishop, that you are obliged to simply passively obey and enact. To view the toolkits and the vision in such a dim light is a surefire recipe to stymie and deplete the Spirit's potential among us.

Rather, I have great confidence and trust in the power of the Spirit working in every baptized and confirmed member of the faithful—and even beyond the bounds of our established parish communities. When we believe in the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit and engage and collaborate in this prophetic endeavor, we sow seeds of God's Spirit. We cooperate with the Lord of the harvest by gathering the produce of the Kingdom realized in the mysterious presence of the Risen Lord among us.