



# CHURCH ON *mission*

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Fruits of the Synod | 2015-2020

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“By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

| JOHN 15:8 |



“This will be  
for us a new Pentecost.”

| ARCHBISHOP LISTECKI |



# mission

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.

The 2014 Synod called for by Archbishop Jerome E. Listeki was a bold move to trust the Holy Spirit to guide us towards a spiritual renewal and compelling vision for the future.

The Synod process began with Archbishop Listeki's Pastoral Letter on the Church, "Who Do You Say That I Am?", in January 2013. ([www.archmil.org/synod](http://www.archmil.org/synod)) This Pastoral Letter focused on the Church as Mystery, Sacrament, and Communion and set the foundation for the Archdiocesan Synod.

Leading up to the Synod, a grassroots discernment process in the fall of 2013 included parish sessions throughout the archdiocese attended by approximately 15,000 people. District gatherings followed in February 2014 in which over 1,500 leaders gave input on initiatives in eight main priority areas.

The actual Synod event was on Pentecost weekend, June 4-6, 2014, and included 500 delegates, observers, and small group facilitators gathering to pray, discuss, and discern the main priorities for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Archbishop Listeki affirmed the Synod priorities in his Synodal Declaration, "Filled with the Holy Spirit." ([www.archmil.org/synod](http://www.archmil.org/synod)) The Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Commission was formed by Archbishop Listeki to oversee the process of initiating responses to the Synod priorities.

A new mission statement for the archdiocese came forth from the Synod and it continues to guide us. Our call to mission has framed the "Movements of the Synod Story" that include the following themes:

- Sent on a Mission to Proclaim Christ
- Called to Equip Leaders for Mission
- Follow Christ's Missionary Mandate to Make Disciples
- Grow in Holiness through the Sacramental Life of the Catholic Church
- The Holy Spirit Continues to Send Us

# Sent on a Mission to Proclaim Christ

Emboldened by the Holy Spirit after the first Pentecost, the apostles went forth to proclaim Christ with courage and conviction. They preached the saving message of Christ crucified and risen from the dead - and the world changed.

They devoted themselves to the communal life and the breaking of the bread. They held things in common and no one was in need. Mighty signs and wonders were done through the apostles and many were added to their number (Acts 2: 42-47).



## FRUITS OF THE SYNOD

The New Pentecost of the Synod sent us out in similar boldness to proclaim Christ and change the world through Him. Our mission was unleashed in new and powerful ways. A new focus on Pro-Life and Urban Ministry was launched to support and build community in vulnerable urban areas.

Christ was proclaimed on college campuses as the Brew City Missionary Project was inaugurated to recruit, form, and send missionaries to build relationships, witness the faith, and lead small group bible studies.

New Pastoral Plans and intentional staffing changes brought new and strengthened engagement with Black, Hispanic, and other Catholic ethnic groups.

Catholic Charities brought hope and healing to those most in need, and our ongoing relationship with La Sagrada Familia, the archdiocesan sister parish, fostered deepening global solidarity.

Christ was proclaimed. The Church was strengthened. Mission happened.



## How are you proclaiming Christ through your ministry?



**Anne Haines, Executive Director  
of UrbanInitiativeMKE and  
Episcopal Representative**

Christ's call to love our neighbor, with a preferential option for those in poverty and on the margins, is at the heart of Urban Ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Our ministries and vision are constantly measured through the lens of whether they work to promote the life and dignity of the human person. In calling the good people of the archdiocese to join in this mission, we proclaim Christ with both our hearts and our hands.

The most inspirational part of my work is having the privilege to walk and work with the faith filled and talented people who reside in our central city. I am also blessed to have so many people throughout the archdiocese offer their "time, talent and treasure" to help build a better world.



**Kelsey Carter  
Brew City Catholic Missionary  
from Fond du Lac**

As a missionary on college campuses, I strive to love each student as Christ does, abundantly and without reserve, and to see them as His beloved. Additionally, it has been beautiful to love each student as if I were loving Christ Himself, because I am, through the Body of Christ.

The most inspirational part of college ministry is when students start to understand that they are also "fishers of men" and Christ has invited them to join the mission. It is extremely humbling and inspiring when students teach me how to do ministry, as we are all journeying together.

*Pro-life and Urban Ministry, as well as Brew City Catholic Missionaries, are ministries established in response to the Synod priorities.*



# Called to Equip Leaders for Mission

During his ministry, Jesus spent most of his time with his disciples. He was intentional about taking time to call them, build friendship with them, and apprentice them in his words and ways. This focused attention on the men and women who followed him was not an accident!

Jesus was intentionally trying to share himself. He wanted his saving mission to continue throughout time; so he poured himself - time, energy, and attention - into this small band of ordinary people. For his mission to continue through them, they needed training. So he equipped his leaders for mission.



## FRUITS OF THE SYNOD

In keeping with Christ's model, the Synod focused on equipping leaders for mission. Leaders were formed for evangelization and trained on moving from maintenance to mission. They were immersed in the meaning and methods of stewardship, focusing on Everyday Stewardship and the Spirituality of Stewardship. And they were mentored on building leadership teams that plan with mission in mind.



Lay disciples were raised up through the creation of a Lay Ministry Office. A lay ministry scholarship was created to equip them for stronger leadership in the Church. And lay ministers were gathered and recognized to inspire them for continued missionary leadership.

Leaders were guided during the CoVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic through Daily Reflections with the bishops, resources for parishes and schools, and initiatives such as "Courageous Communion," "Holy Week in the Domestic Church," "Navigating 2020" and "The Catholic Comeback."

Leaders were equipped. The Church was strengthened. Mission happened.



## How do you lead with mission in mind?



**Fr. Phillip Bogacki, Pastor, St. Bernard and Christ King Parishes, Wauwatosa**

Leadership must be a work in progress. Leaders must be stubborn about the mission of the Catholic parish. If leaders remain lukewarm, less clarity remains to the broader community. A leader must frequently stand alone to say “no” to many good ideas so as to protect the integrity of the mission of the parish.

A parish that has intentionally placed mission at the center is a parish that is humbly adjusting. It is a community attentive to the concept of the “adoption curve,” in which those who are positive and often quiet are lifted up, and count on the community to stay focused on joyful momentum.



**Shanedra Johnson, Director of Outreach Ministries, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee**

In ministry, God has led me to the Cathedral and the mission is to serve those who are in need mentally, physically and spiritually. In my studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, my mission was and continues to be a lifelong learner of our beautiful and diverse Catholic Church and to share that richness with all I encounter.

A highlight of my ministry is connecting with those I serve in an authentic way that brings peace and happiness to their lives and mine, even if just for a moment. One of the best aspects of my studies was the members of my cohort and professors. I have grown and been enriched in ways that have yet to be realized.



*“My mission is to be a lifelong learner of our beautiful and diverse Catholic Church.”*

| SHANEDRA JOHNSON |

# Follow Christ's Missionary Mandate to Make Disciples

Christ was the mission of the Father's saving love for all humankind. During his earthly life, Christ went on mission to make disciples. Making disciples was his plan for forming the Church so that he could continue his mission through the Church for all time.

After rising from the dead, Christ appeared to the disciples and gave them his missionary mandate - "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt. 28:19). They were commissioned for mission - the Church sent to continue Christ's mission of making disciples.

"In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples." (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 20)



## FRUITS OF THE SYNOD

This mission of making disciples was at the heart of the Synod. Catholic ID, a disciple-making process, was introduced to parishes. Thousands were evangelized through "The One Percent Challenge," "The Post Game Review," and "Praying as a Couple."

The importance of Religious Education was highlighted in a formation plan was developed to make disciples throughout the lifespan. An Office for Middle/High School Evangelization was established. Hundreds of young adults were evangelized at the Inheritance Conference, Winter Weekend, and Brewing the Faith.

Seton Catholic Schools was formed to make disciples in Urban Milwaukee, and Archbishop Listecki instituted the "Order of Catechists" ([www.archmil.org/synod](http://www.archmil.org/synod)) to highlight the mission of making disciples.



Disciples were made. The Church was strengthened. Mission happened.

## How do you make disciples through your ministry?



**Deacon Henry Reyes**  
Permanent Deacon, St. Anthony and St. Hyacinth Parishes, Milwaukee

Christ is at the center of every vocation. God has given me the opportunity to educate and form people of every vocation. I regularly deliver homilies and write a column in the *Catholic Herald* as well as give talks to married couples, classes for ministers preparing for ordination, spiritual direction and retreats for singles and other adults.

The root of all teaching is modeling. As a deacon, I get to live the lessons that I try to teach. In carrying my own crosses as husband, father and ordained minister, I try to give a credible example of Christian discipleship. Additionally, I am consecrated to make intercession for all of Christ's disciples in my daily prayers and sacrifices.



**Kathleen Cepelka**  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

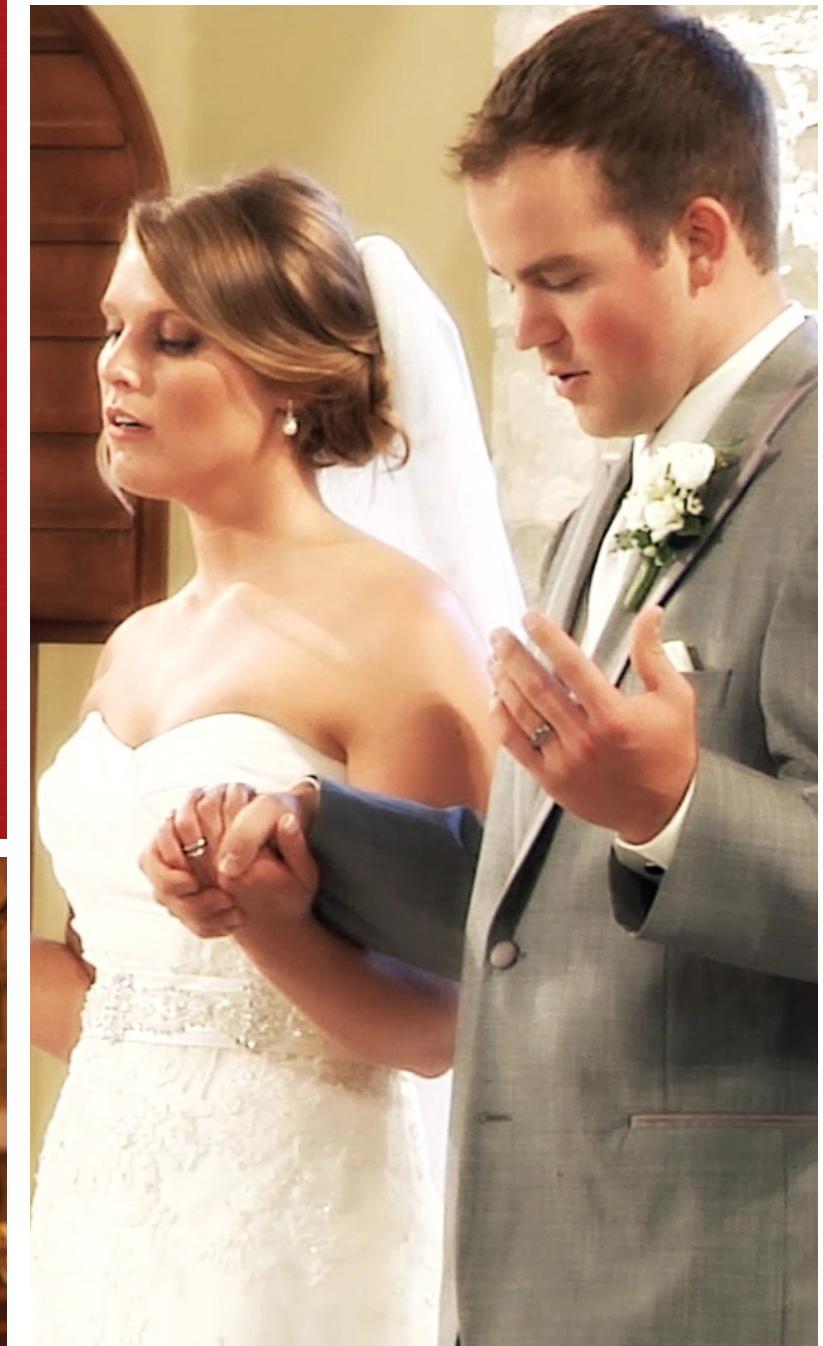
For over 175 years, Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee have been rooted in the mandate of Jesus, "Go and make disciples of all...." This mission drives Catholic educators today more than ever to integrate faith into every aspect of school life and culture. Catholic and non-Catholic students, in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the archdiocese are formed as disciples by learning the faith, being taught to pray, experiencing community, and understanding their Gospel responsibility to serve.

As a lifelong Catholic educator, I've personally experienced the difference, as both a learner and a leader, that a Catholic education can make. From an early age, I was grateful for being shaped spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally by remarkable teachers who inspired me to do and be my best. I'm driven to continue this mission that I love — and to transmit their legacy of idealism to others — because of what they so generously gave to me.

## Grow in Holiness through the Sacramental Life of the Catholic Church

Jesus made disciples so he could lead them into intimacy with the Trinity. This communion, this life of holiness, is our Divinely Appointed design and destiny. We were made by God, to live in God now, and dwell with God for all eternity.

Jesus opened this pathway to Divine Communion by instituting the Sacraments in his Church. He initiates us into communion (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), heals us for communion (Penance, Anointing of the Sick), and sends us in the service of communion (Marriage, Holy Orders).



### FRUITS OF THE SYNOD

As a process of spiritual renewal, the Synod called us to deeper holiness. Vocations to the priesthood and diaconate have grown exponentially through the good work of St. Francis de Sales Seminary and the Office for Diaconate Formation. Marriage Preparation was revitalized to help engaged couples discover God's plan for their marriage.

Jesus' healing has been unleashed through the "12 Hours of Reconciliation" initiative. A video promoting the Mass was widely shared. "A Vision for the Future" was created to promote evangelization through the Sunday Mass. And "Whispers in the Pew" was designed as a guide for parents to help their children participate more fully in Mass.

People grew in holiness. The Church was strengthened. Mission happened.

## How are you growing in holiness?



**Fr. Edward Sanchez,**  
Ordained a Priest May 16, 2020  
Associate Pastor, Holy Family Catholic  
Community, Fond du Lac

I have been growing in faith in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. His resurrection doesn't depend on me; it is an objective event. Even if I fail or make mistakes, Jesus' resurrection still stands and a relationship with him still offers us a new joy and freedom.

As a priest, I hope to teach others to pray. Praying at Mass is tremendously powerful if we offer God our own concerns, hopes, and relationships along with Christ's sacrifice. Living in awareness of God's presence and guidance is also tremendously powerful. Both come from connection to God through prayer.



**Miguel & Susanna Crespo, Presenting Couple,**  
Spanish Marriage Preparation Program

Marriage is a call to holiness because it means sharing everything, being transparent, being true and honest and faithful even in crisis; a selfless calling to love as Christ loved especially when it's most difficult. Marriage is a choice to follow Christ daily within a sacrament, which provides the necessary graces of strength and perseverance in the face of sin and human frailty.

When others witness faithful love and perseverance, mutual respect, and a relationship that has clear direction centered on mutual goals fixed on Christ, the Holy Spirit plants its seeds and does its work in the hearts of people you meet.



"A relationship with Jesus offers us a new joy and freedom."

| FR. EDWARD SANCHEZ |

# The Holy Spirit Continues to Send Us

The Synod was a movement not a moment. It continues to unfold and blossom. Guided by the Holy Spirit blowing mightily in the Church, the Synod will continue to bear fruit. We will continue to Proclaim Christ and Make Disciples through the Sacramental Life of the Church.

The Holy Spirit sends us. The Church is strengthened. Mission happens.



## What is your biggest hope for the future?



**Anne Haines**, Executive Director of UrbanInitiativeMKE and Episcopal Representative

My biggest hope for the future is that we will prioritize our Gospel call to ensure that all people have access to those things necessary for a dignified life. I pray that we both highlight and support the work we are already doing while vastly expanding our ministries and advocacy on behalf of the most vulnerable. I am in awe of the goodness in our 193 parishes—I believe that if we can harness all of that love, the Holy Spirit will lead us to be a profoundly significant force for the building of the Kingdom.



**Kelsey Carter**, Brew City Catholic Missionary

My hope is that as Catholics, our hearts would continue to burn for Christ. May we fall so in love with Christ that we can't help but share Him with others and desire to walk with them on their journey of falling in love with Him as well.



**Fr. Phillip Bogacki**, Pastor, St. Bernard and Christ King Parishes, Wauwatosa

I hope the momentum to act courageously grows. For a deeper return to our roots as the Catholic Church, which is fundamentally focused on the outside. Mission-oriented in every decision we make so as to make the world a better place by drawing more people to the hope and life the Church wants to give to everyone.



**Shanedra Johnson**, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee and Lay Ministry Graduate

My biggest hope is to run a retreat center; when and where is in God's time. In my heart, I feel the Holy Spirit moving me, calling me to this next chapter in my life. I would love to provide all who enter the opportunity to have rest, solitude and peace.



**Deacon Henry Reyes**, Permanent Deacon, St. Anthony and St. Hyacinth Parishes, Milwaukee

My biggest hope is the timeless hope of Christ and the Church throughout the centuries; that all would gain an intimate knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ. I also hope that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Most Glorious Spouse St. Joseph, and all God's Angels and Saints, we would live a life filled with the presence and grace of the Holy Trinity in this world and total union with God in the next.



**Kathleen Cepelka**, Superintendent of Catholic Schools

One of my greatest hopes for the future is that the arts — in all their forms — do not get lost in our pursuit of the practical, the efficient, the massive, and the immediate. I hope that poetry, literature, drama, music, and the visual arts will always have their voice in teaching us of God.



**Fr. Edward Sanchez**, Associate Pastor, Holy Family Catholic Community, Fond du Lac

I hope to be a spiritual father. In other words, I hope that God will use my life as a priest to lead many people to live their married, religious, or single vocations generously and joyfully. And I hope to thank God with them for His gift of abundant life.



**Miguel & Susanna Crespo**, Presenting Couple, Spanish Marriage Preparation Program

First and foremost our hope is in Christ and we sincerely strive to lead one another to heaven. We do this by encouraging one another to prayer and by being involved in ministry, the study of God's word, and frequenting the sacraments. The fruits of our faith will hopefully become spiritual food for our children and future grandchildren.

# Leadership Discussion Guide

The Leadership Discussion Guide presents questions to be used for planning and dialogue by leadership groups, such as the Parish Leadership Team, Parish Staff, Pastoral Council, committees and commissions.

## The Story of the Synod

The 2014 Synod called for by Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki was a bold move to trust the Holy Spirit to guide us towards a spiritual renewal and compelling vision for the future.

- What bold move is the Holy Spirit asking you to take in order to lead your parish toward deep spiritual renewal?
- If you were to paint a picture 3-5 years out, what would a compelling vision of your parish look like?

## Sent on a Mission to Proclaim Christ

Emboldened by the Holy Spirit after the first Pentecost, the apostles went forth to proclaim Christ with courage and conviction. They preached the saving message of Christ crucified and risen from the dead – and the world changed.

- How can you proclaim Christ to the people inside and outside of your parish in ways that are new and fruitful?
- How can you make proclaiming Christ explicit and central to everything you do at the parish?

## Called to Equip Leaders for Mission

Jesus was intentionally trying to share himself. He wanted his saving mission to continue throughout time; so he poured himself – time, energy, and attention – into this small band of ordinary people. For his mission to continue through them, they needed training. So he equipped his leaders for mission.

- Who is in the leadership circle at your parish who needs to be trained for mission?
- How will you designate the time, attention, expertise, and resources to equip your leaders for their mission?

## Follow Christ's Missionary Mandate to Make Disciples

After rising from the dead, Christ appeared to the disciples and gave them his missionary mandate – “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt. 28:19). They were commissioned for mission – the Church sent to continue Christ’s mission of making disciples.

- What is your intentional parish pathway for making disciples – calling seekers, forming disciples, and sending missionaries?
- What would it look like to align everything in your parish around this threefold movement of making disciples?

## Grow in Holiness through the Sacramental Life of the Catholic Church

Jesus opened this pathway to Divine Communion by instituting the Sacraments in his Church. He initiates us into communion (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), heals us for communion (Penance, Anointing of the Sick), and sends us in the service of communion (Marriage, Holy Orders).

- In what new and inspiring ways can you invite your parish members to desire and pursue holiness through the Sacraments?
- How can you awaken parish members to the truth that their origin, identity, and destiny are found in communion with the Holy Trinity?

## The Holy Spirit Continues to Send Us

The Synod was a movement not a moment. It continues to unfold and blossom. Guided by the Holy Spirit blowing mightily in the Church, the Synod will continue to bear fruit. We will continue to Proclaim Christ and Make Disciples through the Sacramental Life of the Church.

- Take time together to pray about being sent by the Holy Spirit. What is God saying about where you need to go and how to get there?
- How can you make the questions in this leadership guide a regular and central part of your leadership meetings, such as the Parish Leadership Team, Parish Staff, Pastoral Council, and committees and commissions?





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*of* MILWAUKEE