



Strategic Pastoral Planning Letter from Bishop David P. Talley



May 12, 2023

Dear Faithful,

The Church in West Tennessee has been on a journey for the past four years. We celebrated 50 years of history as a Diocese with our first ever Eucharistic Congress, bringing together all 47 Parishes and Missions in a joyful celebration of the source and summit of our faith. We proudly processed with our Lord through the streets of Memphis. We also gathered to prayerfully listen, reflect and share dialogue by participating in the Synod for a Synodal Church.

We also had to endure the lingering effects of a pandemic which necessitated the short-term closure of our churches and schools as well as the personal decision to mask or not mask. We learned firsthand, by its short-term absence, how important receiving the Eucharist is for our body and souls and we rejoiced together in His return to our lives.

United in Faith, our first Diocesan Capital Campaign in more than 20 years, was conducted with pledges now exceeding \$30 million for Parish, Mission and Diocesan needs. The generosity of the parishioners of West Tennessee has shown through, even during a pandemic.

Truly, our Catholic Diocese of Memphis in West Tennessee has demonstrated the wisdom of: *¡Adelante!* Going Forward Together, On Mission... That All May Be One (John 17:21). But what comes next? How does our Diocese go forward in bringing Jesus Christ to all those between the rivers? We are embarking on a Strategic Pastoral Plan. This tool will allow us, as an entire Diocese, to focus on those questions for the next five years and answer them in an organized, intentional and inclusive manner.

The program of pastoral revitalization that is envisioned for the next two years seeks to respond to three fundamental questions:

- **Where are we today?** What are the challenges and opportunities we face as the Church of Jesus Christ in West Tennessee in the third decade of the 2020s? (Attentive Listening)
- **Where is God calling us to be?** Where is the Holy Spirit leading us? (Prayerful Discernment)
- **How will we get there together?** What concrete actions must we take to arrive at the destination planned for us in God's Providence? (Collaborative Engagement)

All members of the Catholic community in West Tennessee will be invited and encouraged to participate in this planning process--please see the next page for the Listening Session Schedule.

As we journey together in prayer, reflection and action, we trust that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) will accompany us--to teach, guide and empower us to build a future full of hope for all the people we are called to serve in our local communities and beyond.

Please join me in praying that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we listen to God's Word, and to one another, as we seek to discern God's will for our Church in the years ahead. May our Lord give each of us "A New Heart" as we strive to serve God's Holy people in West Tennessee and beyond. I am yours

In the light and love of the Lord,

Most Reverend David P. Talley
Sixth Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Memphis