



## Catholic Diocese of Memphis

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Dear Faithful,

Our Catholic Diocese of Memphis initiated a two-year Strategic Pastoral Planning process in January 2023. The purpose of this process is to invoke the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our efforts to apply the principles found in the Gospels and in the Tradition of the Church to the circumstances of life in West Tennessee today. Our efforts seek 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 2000s?  
(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)

### Progress to Date

With strong support from our Clergy and Ministry leadership, including letters and video messages from Bishop David P. Talley, all members of the Catholic community in West Tennessee were invited and encouraged to participate in the Strategic Pastoral Planning process through:

- **12 Listening Sessions** (8 English and 4 Spanish) that involved more than 500 people in all four Deaneries in West Tennessee.
- **25 Individual Interviews** with members of the Strategic Pastoral Planning Committee and other Pastoral Leaders representing diverse communities in the Diocese.
- **An Online Survey** that more than 2,000 people have participated in.

During these next two months (August-September 2023) a Strategic Pastoral Planning Summary Report will be developed based on what was heard in the Listening Sessions, Interviews, and Online Survey. Once the Summary Report is available (October 2023), it will be shared with all members of the Catholic community in West Tennessee with an invitation to make additional comments and suggestions.

### Vision Statement

After everyone has had an opportunity to review the Summary Report, the Strategic Pastoral Planning Committee, led by Bishop Talley, will prepare a Vision Statement based on the prayerful discernment process and an updated Demographics Report. The Vision Statement will be published during the Advent Season (December 2023).

## **Plan Development**

In January 2024, the Strategic Pastoral Planning Committee will begin to develop detailed action plans designed to achieve the Vision Statement. The Planning Committee will be assisted by a few Task Teams representing different areas of our Ministries within our Diocese.

The process will involve Committee and Task Team meetings during the first six to eight months of 2024. Then, after consulting with our Presbyteral and Finance Councils, and Leaders of other Diocesan organizations, the Planning Committee will recommend a three to five year Strategic Pastoral Plan to the Bishop for his final approval and implementation in January 2025.

As we have come together in prayer, reflection, and action, we trust that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are accompanying us—to teach, guide, and empower us to build a future full of hope for all the people of West Tennessee.

Please continue to pray for the success of this important Strategic Pastoral Planning process.

### **Strategic Pastoral Planning Prayer**

Almighty and ever-living God,  
help make us one in mind and heart,  
as we continue to go forward, together, on Mission.  
Lord, give us open hands, to better serve you in others.  
An open mind, to better carry out your call.  
An open heart, to better love you in others.  
Give us A New Heart, For Our Mission.  
And lead us, your people in West Tennessee,  
the Catholic Diocese of Memphis, into eternal life.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen