

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS - GO OUT & MAKE DISCIPLES

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus famously commissioned the apostles to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). In many ways, this can be considered the vocation, or call, of the Church in the world.

As faithful Catholics, we can answer this call by embracing our baptismal mission to mirror the priestly, prophetic, and kingly holiness of Christ by how we live our lives. When we live our baptismal mission with purpose, we become a mission-driven church that can inspire others to want to join us on mission. We become a Church of equipped disciples that go out and make more disciples, as Jesus commanded us. This takes, as I previously shared, all of God’s people working together, ordained clergy and the lay faithful, all embracing both their universal and specific vocations.

To this end, Pope Francis has announced the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.” The Holy Father will open this three-year synodal journey of consultations and discernment this October. It will include three phases (diocesan, national and continental) and will culminate in an October 2023 assembly in Rome. “Communion, participation, and mission” is a powerful call to the entire Church —not only the clergy but the faithful to come together and make Jesus known, particularly in the Eucharist.

In this synodal process, Pope Francis is bringing to fruition what he has preached throughout his papacy: **the lay faithful have an important role to play in the mission and life of the Church.** “The fullness of the synodal process can only truly exist if the local churches are involved in that process,” the synod document states. This is an invitation to everyone - parishes small and large, all groups, ministries, apostolates, movements, and individuals - to be heard. Considering this, I ask for your participation and support throughout the diocesan phase of this synodal process.



Baptisms at Our Lady of Grace in Westport

MISSION STEPS

- Regularly pray for the gift of discernment and that individuals may hear and respond to God’s call.
- Champion a renewed sense of lay service by re-engaging Catholics in parish ministries. Grow parish ministry opportunities that allow for various individuals to participate in their faith more actively, through service to their parish and community at large.
- Foster a culture of vocations, with parishes and Catholic schools planning ways to pray, discuss, and help individuals discern the topic of vocations at all ages. To this end, parishes should consider the development of a vocations ministry.
- Nominate “parish ambassadors” in each parish to aid in ongoing evangelization and revitalization efforts at the parish level. These can be parishioners already working on revitalization efforts or individuals interested in getting more involved. Parish ambassadors will be supported by our Diocesan pastoral teams.
- Improve support for our clergy. As a Diocese, we recently hired a Director of Clergy Support to provide more assistance for the health and wellness of our priests. To this same end, as a Diocese, we are introducing Chancery Workshops for the recently ordained.
- Support parish revitalization efforts. As a Diocese, we formed the Secretariat for the New Evangelization to offer expertise, services and evangelizing opportunities to aid parishes.
- Create diocesan resources and trainings for parishes to support and equip parish staff, leadership, and parish ambassadors to accomplish these pursuits.

