

# Led By the Spirit: A Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Trenton Study Guide



## Part 1: Planning for Mission

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Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Scripture: Luke 4: 16 – 21 and 42-43

*Faith Sharing:* What does Jesus say about the purpose for which He was sent—His mission?

How do you understand your own purpose as a disciple of Jesus?

It has been said that the Church does not have a mission; rather, that the Mission of Christ has a Church. For what purpose does the Church exist?

What does this passage say to you about the missionary nature of the Church?

*Read the Bishop's Letter, Diocesan Mission Statement, Introduction, and Part 1 of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan*

Underline or make note of the phrases, concepts or passages in this section that stand out for you. *(If you are doing this as a group, you might read in advance and during your time together have each person share one idea and explain why it is significant to them.)*

*For Group Discussion*

- What is your experience of belonging to the universal Catholic Church? To the Church of Trenton (diocese)? To your parish?
- Why does the Church community plan?
- What do you think the characteristics of “pastoral planning” are? How should this process be different from other kinds of planning? What are the similarities?

*For Personal Reflection:*

- How do I proclaim and advance the kingdom of God?
- What does it mean to me that Jesus continues to work in and through the Church?



## Part 2: Our Time to Be Church

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Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9: 19-27

**Faith Sharing:** Saint Paul tells that in order to preach effectively he must reach his hearers wherever they are. He must have a plan to achieve his goal. How does this lesson apply to the Church at this moment in time?

**Teaching of the Church:** Please read the quote from the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* found at the beginning of Part 2 of the Pastoral Plan.

- Where in our contemporary experience do you see a sign of God's presence and purpose?

**Read Part 2 of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan including the 11 Elements of a Vibrant Parish**

Underline or make note of the phrases, concepts or passages in this section that stand out for you. (If you are doing this as a group, you might read in advance and during your time together have each person share one idea and explain why it is significant to them.)

**For Group Discussion**

- It can be tempting to see each "sign" only as it points to a challenge for the Church. In reality, each "sign" also presents opportunities for proclaiming and advancing the Kingdom of God. Can you identify some of the opportunities that are before us as the Church of Trenton?
- Are there other "signs" that are particular to your parish, municipality, or region of the diocese? What opportunities do they present?

**For Personal Reflection**

- What is motivating to you about the vision of Church described in this section?
- What new patterns of working together can you imagine?



## Part 3: Focusing on our Priorities for Mission and Ministry

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Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Scripture: Philippians 3: 12 -14

**Faith Sharing:** Our parish communities are always striving to move forward in Christ. They hope to show forth the person of Jesus in their life and ministry more and more. How does this passage encourage you?

**Read Part 3 of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Trenton**

Underline or make note of the phrases, concepts or passages in this section that stand out for you. *(If you are doing this as a group, you might read in advance and during your time together have each person share one idea and explain why it is significant to them.)*

**For Group Discussion**

- How much of your parish's energy and resources are focused on maintaining present programs and services? What are the implications of this?
- How well does your parish help parishioners to identify their gifts and place themselves at the service of others?

**For Personal Reflection**

- To which goal or objective are you most attracted?
- Which stimulates you to immediately think about how you could do something?
- Which goal or objective challenges you the most? Makes you uncomfortable?



## Part 4: How Will You Respond?

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Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Scriptures: Isaiah 43: 18-21 and John 14: 1-14

Faith Sharing: How is God at work in the world? What is God doing that is new?  
How is God at work in you?

Read Part 4 of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Trenton

Underline or make note of the phrases, concepts or passages in this section that stand out for you. (If you are doing this as a group, you might read in advance and during your time together have each person share one idea and explain why it is significant to them.)

For Group Discussion

- How do you think your parish could engage in pastoral planning? Who would it be important to involve?
- If asked by your Pastor to identify one of the goals (from the seven in the plan) that you think your parish should work on this year, which would you select? Why?

For Personal Reflection

In a famous passage attributed to Cardinal Dearden, and later to Archbishop Romero, we read:

*“The Kingdom is not only beyond our effort, it is beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete.... We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, and opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest....”*

- What is it that you need to let go of in order to embrace what God is doing?
- What can you do that you are not already doing? Or--What can you do differently to take a step along the way?