



Transforming Fire: A New Pentecost to form Spirit-Filled Evangelizers

A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization for the Diocese of Marquette

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:1-4)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Let us pray for a new Pentecost in the Diocese of Marquette! Let us pray that the Holy Spirit come upon us anew, that by the transforming fire of his love he may fill us with the *Joy of the Gospel* and form us into Spirit-filled evangelizers, as he transformed the Apostles on the day of Pentecost!

In my visits to all the parishes and missions of the Diocese of Marquette, I have witnessed personally how you are living out the *Joy of the Gospel*. I pray that the fire of God's love already enkindled in your hearts will burst into flame and grow, as the Holy Spirit transforms us into Spirit-filled evangelizers.

On the day I was ordained and installed as the thirteenth Bishop of the Diocese of Marquette, I shared with you my pastoral plan for the diocese when I asked you to ***be a friend of Jesus, make a friend, and introduce your friend to Jesus***. This three-fold approach succinctly summarizes how we evangelize. ***To evangelize means helping people encounter Jesus by sharing the Gospel message so that they make a personal decision to follow Jesus in faith.***

In this pastoral letter, I wish to share a more detailed vision of our pastoral plan, in which ***we allow the Holy Spirit to form each and every one of us into a Spirit-filled evangelizer***, like our first bishop, the Venerable Frederic Baraga. ***Spirit-filled evangelizers are Christians who are transformed by the love of the Holy Spirit and follow the Spirit's lead to share Jesus with others.*** Together, as members of Christ's body, the Church, the Holy Spirit will work powerfully through us and our parish communities to draw others closer to Jesus.

Pope Francis describes Spirit-filled evangelizers in this way:

Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apostles go forth from themselves and turned

them into heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesía*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence. (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 259)

Please join me in praying for a new Pentecost in the Diocese of Marquette by praying the following prayer every day:

Prayer for the Formation of Spirit-Filled Evangelizers

O Holy Spirit come into my life and my heart. By the fire of your love, transform me and all Catholics throughout Michigan's Upper Peninsula into Spirit-filled evangelizers. I pray that more and more people may come to know the love of Jesus Christ and make a personal decision to follow him. I pray for all the people that I know who are not practicing any faith. Touch their hearts with your love, O Holy Spirit. Work through me so that they may have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and follow him in faith. To you, O Holy Spirit, and to the Father and to the Son, be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen

In this pastoral letter, I will discuss the formation of Spirit-filled evangelizers in two parts, first by offering a vision and second by providing concrete ways for us to respond to the Lord's call.

Part One: The Vision of the Pastoral Plan

I will outline a vision for the formation of Spirit-filled Evangelizers in three steps: (1) be a friend of Jesus: personal encounter and prayer; (2) make a friend: building a community of love and forming welcoming parishes; (3) introduce your friend to Jesus: sharing Jesus with others and helping them make a personal decision to follow him in faith.

1. Be a Friend of Jesus: Personal Encounter and Prayer

A. Personal Encounter

The foundation for the formation of a Spirit-filled evangelizer is our personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit. In that encounter, we discover that a personal relationship with Jesus, knowing and loving God, is the true source of our happiness.

Pope Benedict XVI describes the foundational encounter in this way:

We have come to believe in God's love: in these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his life. Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. Saint John's Gospel describes that event in these words: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should ... have eternal life" (3:16). (*God is Love*, 1)

People encounter God in many ways. Here are just a few examples from the Bible: An encounter with God may be a quiet, peaceful awareness of his presence. Jesus speaks of the presence of the Holy Spirit and knowing him because he is within us (John 14:15-17). Jesus said that he would be with us always (Matthew 28:20). The Prophet Elijah encountered God in quiet stillness (1 Kings 19:12). We may simply be aware that God is good as we “taste and see the goodness of the Lord” (Psalm 34:9). We can experience God’s love burning in our hearts as the disciples did on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:32). God can fill us with joy: “You have put gladness in my heart more than when grain and wine abound” (Psalm 4:8). We can experience God as a source of strength, peace and comfort (Psalm 23). Sometimes an experience of God can be quite powerful as when St. Paul encountered the Lord on the way to Damascus (Acts 9). (For more on the experience of God, see Thomas Dubay, S.M., *Authenticity: A Biblical Theology of Discernment*, 56-80.)

A personal encounter with Jesus heals the wounds of our hearts and opens the door to faith. The Gospels are filled with examples of how people encountered Jesus and his healing love. There are many accounts of healings that continue today. God pours out his love and mercy in abundance to heal us from sin. The fundamental healing we need is from sin, which breaks our relationship with God and causes brokenness and disorder in society. Jesus calls us to repent from our sins, not hiding from him but bringing ourselves honestly to him as we are. When we confess our sins, he pours out his love and mercy in abundance to heal us and restore our relationship with the Father while helping us live relationships of justice, peace, and love in society. Jesus is also able to heal negative emotions from our past with his love. Moreover, the physical healings we read about in the Gospels continue in our midst today through the power of prayer in Jesus' name. Jesus loves us and wants to encounter us where we are, to heal and transform us by his presence as he calls us to make a decision to commit our whole life to follow him in faith.

In the Gospel accounts, the healing work of Jesus is connected with faith. Those who encounter Jesus' power and love through his forgiveness of their sins and through emotional and physical healing, are always invited by Jesus to put their faith in him. Jesus' healing works are demonstrations of his love for people, and what he wants in return is their personal faith, trust and surrender to him as Lord. He thirsts for their love and a relationship with them. For example, in the healing of the man born blind (John 9), we read this dialogue between Jesus and the man who was healed:

He [Jesus] found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking to you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshipped him. (John 9:35-38)

Moreover, when we encounter Jesus and are touched by his love, we desire to turn away from our sins and change our lives. For example, when Zacchaeus encountered Jesus, he said: “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I shall repay it four times over.” (Luke 19:8)

Let us open our hearts to the love of God by bringing ourselves to Jesus as we are, with all of our sins and brokenness, that we may have a personal encounter with him and that he may heal the wounds of our hearts. Allow me to reiterate the words of Pope Francis:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask

all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace”. (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 3)

B. Prayer

The personal encounter with Jesus is deepened and renewed through the celebration of the Sacraments and a life of daily prayer.

The Second Vatican Council speaks of the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our life. At Mass we encounter Jesus most of all in the Holy Eucharist. At Mass we witness a miracle. Bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Our Lord Jesus gives us himself as spiritual food. When we receive Holy Communion, it should not be merely an external gesture but an opening of our heart to receive Jesus and be one with him. When you receive Holy Communion, do you invite Jesus more deeply into your heart?

At Mass we also encounter Jesus through the readings from Sacred Scripture. When the readings are proclaimed at Mass, God really speaks to us. Have you ever stopped to think about what God wants to say to you in the Scripture readings? To focus our attention, it is helpful to read the readings before Mass, even together as a family.

At Mass, we also encounter Jesus through the ministry of the priest and through one another. I will say more on this below when I discuss *Forming Welcoming Parishes*.

Given how important Mass is for an ongoing encounter with Jesus, let us all renew our commitment to participate prayerfully in Mass every Sunday (or Saturday evening).

Jesus has also given us the Sacrament of Penance to help us have a regular experience of his love and mercy. By going to Confession frequently, we are healed of our sins and continually reminded of God’s love and mercy. Many Catholics have the custom of receiving the Sacrament of Penance at least twice a year, for example, during Advent and Lent. If we truly wish to grow in our spiritual life, it is preferable to go to Confession even more frequently. The grace of the sacrament helps us to turn away from sin and grow closer to the Lord; thus, monthly Confession is a good practice. Let us all strive to go to Confession at least twice a year, preferably more often.

Daily personal prayer is also an important way for us to deepen a personal encounter with Jesus. Quoting St. John Damascene, the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines prayer in this way: “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” (CCC, 2559)

Our prayer consists in blessing and thanksgiving, petition, intercession, adoration and praise. In prayer of blessing and thanksgiving we respond to God’s goodness and gifts with gratitude. In prayer of petition we ask God for our needs, for what is good for us. In prayer of intercession we pray for other people on their behalf. In prayer of adoration and praise we acknowledge that God is God and we are

his creatures. We praise God and stand in awe and wonder at his majesty (cf. CCC, 2626-2643). Does your daily prayer involve all of these dimensions?

Personal prayer is expressed in three forms: vocal prayer, meditation and contemplation. Vocal prayer involves both body and soul. In vocal prayer, we give verbal expression to the interior prayer of our heart, and the best example is the Lord's Prayer. In meditation, we use our thoughts and imagination to reflect prayerfully on the Word of God in the Bible above all, and speak to God from our heart.

Contemplation is a form of prayer that God gives us. We cannot contemplate on our own.

Contemplation can be described as a simple loving gaze on God in silence (cf. CCC, 2700-2719). Is your daily personal prayer expressed in vocal prayer and either meditation or contemplation?

I invite all of you to renew your commitment to personal prayer by striving to spend at least fifteen minutes a day in prayer when you can speak to God from your heart.

Currently there are many ways to foster a personal encounter with Jesus and spiritual formation in prayer in the Diocese of Marquette. These include Youth Encounter, the annual trip to the Steubenville Youth Conference, See the See, Going Deeper, The Baraga Youth Fraternity, Cursillo, Koinonia, Alpha, retreats at Marygrove, Life in the Spirit Seminars, EWTN and Catholic Radio, parish missions, pilgrimages, *Corpus Christi* and other processions, home enthronements to the Sacred Heart, small prayer groups, Eucharistic Adoration, the World Apostolate of Fatima, and Secular Carmelite Communities. I provide here just a general overview, and I invite all apostolates in the diocese to reflect on how they are contributing to the Church's mission of evangelization. The fall evangelization workshops will be forums to exchange concrete ideas and best practices for us as individuals, families and parishes to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to foster a personal encounter with Jesus and formation in prayer.

2. Make a Friend: Building a Community of Love and Forming Welcoming Parishes

In addition to being a friend of Jesus, it is necessary for us to "make a friend" and share with others the love of Jesus that we have received. I encourage you to share the love of Jesus with others by building a community of love and forming welcoming parishes with the help of the Holy Spirit.

A. Building a Community of Love

Pope Francis has referred to the Church as a field hospital. Many people in the world are wounded by a lack of love. Spirit-filled evangelizers are so filled with the love of God that they long to share that love with other people. The key to sharing God's love with others is to open our hearts to God and allow him to love us first so that others may encounter God's love through us. Then we need to be mindful that some of our behaviors stand in the way of God's love and need to be changed with the help of God's grace. It is a grave scandal when there is a lack of love among Christians, for our mutual love is to be a sign for non-believers that we are Jesus' disciples. I offer here some questions to help us all reflect on how we love each other.

Will other people experience the love of God by the way that I treat them? Am I friendly? Am I honest, trustworthy and dependable? Do I listen? Do I make sacrifices for other people? Am I patient? Am I generous? Am I grateful? Am I joyful? Am I fair and just? Am I kind and gentle? When necessary, do I offer fraternal correction lovingly? In my relationships, am I concerned about what I want or what is best for the other person? Do I lose my temper? Do I fall into gossip or jealousy? Do I give of my time, money and possessions to meet the needs of others? Do I give people the benefit of the doubt or am I judgmental? Do I forgive or do I hold a grudge? Do I love and accept other people as they are?

Let us build a community of love. Let us strive to share the love of God with the members of our family, our friends, neighbors and coworkers. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will work through us so that others will experience his love.

B. Forming Welcoming Parishes

Welcoming parishes are formed when the priest and the people desire to share the love of Jesus with everyone who walks through the doors of the church or has contact with the parish in any way.

Welcoming parishes are formed when the priest and the people desire to share the love of Jesus by reaching out to those in need in the broader community. The interior desire to share the love of Jesus gives rise to the actions that form and give expression to a welcoming parish that becomes a place of encounter with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

To form welcoming parishes it is important to focus on the Sunday celebration of Mass and how we can cooperate with the Holy Spirit to facilitate a personal encounter with Jesus by sharing his love. As I indicated above, at Mass we also encounter Jesus through the priest and through one another, so this provides an indication of how we form welcoming parishes. Thus, I will provide the following reflection questions to help the priest and the people to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in forming a welcoming parish where people can encounter God's love.

Reflection questions for the priest: Do I celebrate Mass prayerfully and reverently, so that by my example of prayer I may draw the congregation into deeper prayer where they will encounter Jesus and his love? Do the people know that I love them by the way that I preach? When I preach, do I speak to the people from my heart? Does my preaching frequently include the basic Gospel message so that the people know that they can have a personal relationship with Jesus who loves them and died and rose for their salvation? Do I convey my love for the people in my preaching to help them apply the Word of God to their lives by giving concrete action steps? When I preach on a challenging moral issue to call the people to conversion as Jesus did, do I assure the people of God's mercy, a chance to start again, and look on them with love as Jesus did with the rich young man (Mark 10:21) when he called him to conversion? Do I look for people whom I do not know and introduce myself to them, and help connect newcomers with members of the parish?

Reflection questions for the people: Does the way I treat those around me help them to experience the love of Jesus? If I see people I do not know, do I introduce myself and ask their names? If someone new comes into the church, do I make them feel at home, that they belong? When I come to Mass, do I pray for the people sitting around me so that they will experience God's love? Do I smile? Am I happy to see families at church and do I thank parents bringing their young children to church, even if they make a little noise? Am I patient when Mass is over, or do I nearly run people over in the parking lot? Do I gossip about the priest and other parishioners, or do I say good things about them?

There are many other ways that people can encounter Christ through a welcoming parish community: greeters at the entrance to the church, coffee and donuts or other socials, working together to reach out and serve those in need, listing new parish members, newly baptized and newly married in the parish bulletin to welcome, congratulate and encourage them, visiting sick and homebound, the hospitality of funeral luncheons, inviting friends and neighbors to Mass and other events at the parish, small prayer groups and Bible studies, inviting people to use the gifts God has given them to serve the parish community. I provide here just some ideas. The fall evangelization workshops will be forums to

exchange concrete ideas and best practices for us as individuals, families and parishes to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to build a community of love and form welcoming parishes.

3. Introduce your Friend to Jesus: Sharing Jesus with others and helping them to make a personal decision to follow him in faith.

As I stated above in the introduction, ***to evangelize means helping people encounter Jesus by sharing the Gospel message so that they make a personal decision to follow him in faith.***

In this regard, Pope Paul VI stated:

There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.
(*Evangelization in the Modern World*, 22)

Thus, to share our faith means to share Jesus - to proclaim his name, that is, his divine identity as Son of God and Savior; to proclaim his teachings, in season and out of season; to proclaim his life, with the marvels of his healings, his love, and his sacrificial death and resurrection; to proclaim his promises, that those who believe in him shall have eternal life; to proclaim his kingdom, that he is the Lord who calls us to commit ourselves completely and follow him, participating in his self-giving and sacrificial love for the Father and for the world.

To share Jesus with others, we first must have been evangelized and made a personal decision to follow him. In other words, we need to “be a friend of Jesus.” To share Jesus, we must have a relationship of trust and love with others. We need to “make a friend.” To share Jesus or “introduce our friend to Jesus,” we need to learn more about him and grow as his disciple (catechesis). We also need to learn how to share Jesus (formation for mission).

A. Faith Formation/Catechesis

Once someone has encountered Jesus and believes in him, there is need for ongoing faith formation and catechesis so that one’s faith may grow deeper. In the Diocese of Marquette we are blessed with nine Catholic grades schools to help form children in the faith and religious education programs for grade school and high school students. Adults also find many faith formation opportunities such as the Spring Study day and the Hospitality Lecture. Parishes offer many adult faith formation opportunities, such as Bible studies. There are also countless good books as well as resources on the internet.

To share our faith with others, to be a Spirit-filled evangelizer, we must seek continually to grow deeper in our faith. *The more we know our faith, the easier it is for us to explain it to others who ask us about it.* As it says in the First Letter of Peter “*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence.*” (1 Peter 3:15-16)

Thus, I invite everyone to seek a deeper understanding of our faith through the many available opportunities. In addition, I encourage all parishes, schools and the diocesan curia to enhance the good work that is already being done and discontinue what is not effective.

B. Formation for Mission: Sharing our Faith with Others

If we love Jesus, we will want to tell others about him, as Pope Francis said:

The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known? (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 264)

In fact, the Second Vatican Council taught that sharing our faith with others is the mission of everyone in the Church. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, for example, underscores the role of the laity in bringing the Gospel of Jesus into the world.

But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world. They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ. (*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 2)

On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world. (*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 3)

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very testimony of their Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have the power to draw men to belief and to God; for the Lord says, "Even so let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). However, an apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life. "For the charity of Christ impels us" (2 Cor. 5:14). The words of the Apostle should echo in all hearts, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). (*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, 6)

Pope Francis reiterates this teaching.

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. *Mt* 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new

evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples". If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: "We have found the Messiah!" (Jn 1:41). The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him "because of the woman's testimony" (Jn 4:39). So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, "immediately proclaimed Jesus" (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21). So what are we waiting for? (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 120)

Therefore, ***sharing our faith with others is an essential element of following Jesus***. It is not optional. Yet many of us do not know how to share our faith, or feel uncomfortable doing it. I wish to remind you of the power of the Holy Spirit to form us into Spirit-filled evangelizers. One of the best ways for us to share our faith with others is personal witness, that is, when we share with others how Jesus has touched our life like the Samaritan woman did. Personal witness shows that Jesus is alive, that he has risen from the dead and is working in the hearts of people. I encourage all of you to think and pray about how Jesus has touched your life, and how you would share that with someone. Why is Jesus important to you? What difference has Jesus made in your life?

To be effective evangelizers, we do not have to go out with placards on a street corner. Evangelization is done through and in relationships, witnessing to what Jesus has done for us, praying with people and accompanying them in their search for truth, and inviting them to join us in spiritual things such as missions, retreats, Bible studies, small groups, and other places where they can encounter Jesus. The Holy Spirit will give us the enthusiasm to evangelize others. As we are open to his inspirations, he will give us a freedom of speaking and relating to each other on a spiritual level, talking about Jesus and our love for him.

Learning how to share our faith with others has been one of the most neglected areas of our faith formation. We have not been well formed for mission. Therefore, I encourage all parishes, schools and the diocesan curia to incorporate better teaching on how to share our faith in all of our training, formation and educational programs. I invite all of you to participate in the opportunities that will be available to help us learn how to share our faith with others better.

I have provided here some general directions for sharing our faith. The fall evangelization workshops will be forums to exchange concrete ideas and best practices for us as individuals, families and parishes to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to be formed in our faith and share our faith with others.

Part Two: Ways to Respond to the Lord's Call

It is God's will that the Church should grow, that more and more people have a personal encounter with Jesus and make a personal decision to follow him in faith. Such growth is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet God wills to form us into Spirit-filled Evangelizers and calls us to cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that there will be an increase in the number of Catholics actively practicing their faith and sharing their faith with others.

Concrete ways to help us respond to the Lord's call and cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in the formation of Spirit-filled evangelizers and the growth of the Church are the following:

A. Ways to Respond for All Catholics in the Diocese of Marquette

- All Catholics are encouraged to renew regularly their commitment to follow Jesus.
- All Catholics in the Diocese of Marquette are encouraged to spend at least 15 minutes in personal prayer each day and to pray daily the *Prayer for the Formation of Spirit-Filled Evangelizers* given at the beginning of this pastoral letter.
- All Catholics are encouraged to renew their commitment to participate in Mass each weekend and go to Confession at least twice a year, preferably more often such as monthly.
- All Catholics who are married are encouraged to renew regularly their marriage vows and their commitment to their spouse and children.
- All Catholics are encouraged to build a community of love and make their parishes more welcoming by desiring to share the love of Jesus with everyone who walks through the doors of the church and with people in need in the broader community.
- All Catholics are encouraged to participate in formation opportunities available in their parishes and throughout the diocese to deepen their prayer, to increase their knowledge of their faith, and to learn how to share their faith with others.
- All Catholics are encouraged to pray for the people that they know who are not practicing any faith and pray for inspiration to share Jesus with them.
- All Catholics are encouraged to offer a voluntary penance for a new Pentecost, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Diocese of Marquette.

B. Ways to Respond for Priests and Deacons

- All priests and deacons are encouraged to deepen their prayer life and renew regularly the promises that they made on their ordination day.
- All priests and deacons are encouraged to improve their homilies, ***especially by offering concrete, practical suggestions or action steps on how people can apply the Sacred Scriptures in their lives.***
- All priests and deacons are encouraged to ***include frequently in their homilies the kerygma***, or the fundamental Gospel message.
- All priests and deacons are encouraged to ***include frequently in their homilies practical suggestions on how people can make their parish communities more welcoming and how people can share their faith with others.***

- All priest and deacon convocations for the next five years will focus on evangelization related themes, **especially preaching**. Other possible themes include marriage preparation and outreach to marriage, youth and young adult ministry, forming parish teams for evangelization, forming people to share their faith, etc.
- All priests and deacons are encouraged to offer a weekly voluntary penance for the conversion of the non-practicing members of their parishes, and of those within their parish boundaries who have no faith.

C. Ways to Respond for Religious

- All Religious are encouraged to renew their vows regularly and deepen their commitment to prayer.
- All Religious are encouraged to strengthen their community life as a sign of God's love.
- All Religious are encouraged to enhance the work of evangelization in which they are engaged according to their charism.
- All Religious are encouraged to pray for the people whom they serve.

D. Ways to Respond for Parishes and Missions

- Beginning July 1, 2017, every parish and mission will take a weekly weekend Mass attendance count. This will provide us with a good baseline number for Mass attendance and allow us to track growth. The numbers will be submitted to the Chancery via an online form.
- Year One, Pentecost 2017 to Pentecost 2018:
 - Each parish/mission or cluster of parishes/missions must **develop and submit its plan for evangelization to the Bishop by Pentecost, 2018**. Each parish plan must include at least one concrete objective in each of the following areas:
 - Fostering a Personal Encounter with Jesus and a Life of Prayer
 - Formation of a Welcoming Parish Community
 - Formation of Disciples in the Faith
 - Formation of Disciples for Mission
 - The mission of evangelization is parish-wide. Thus, ***it is highly recommended that pastors form a parish team to assist them in developing and implementing their parish plan for evangelization.***
 - It is recommended that parishes and missions focus on the first two areas from Pentecost 2018 to Pentecost 2020, and the second two areas from Pentecost 2020 to Pentecost 2022. Thus, the focus of year one is the formation of the plan and the formation of a parish team for evangelization. The focus of years two and three is fostering a personal encounter with Jesus and a life of prayer and the formation of a welcoming parish community. The focus of years four and five is the formation of

disciples in the faith and for mission. Many parishes are already engaged in these areas of ministry and outreach. Thus, ***the objectives of the parish plan may be ways to enhance and grow already existing ministries.*** For example, the focus areas can be incorporated into already existing small groups and youth and adult faith formation.

- Years Two through Five, Pentecost 2018 to Pentecost 2022:
 - Parishes and Missions implement their plans for evangelization.

E. Ways to Respond for the Diocesan Curia

- All members of the curia are encouraged to reflect the love of Christ to all the people they serve, including everyone who walks through the door, everyone who writes, calls or sends an email.
- All members of the curia are encouraged to pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on how to share Jesus with others.
- In 2017, the Fall Evangelization Workshops conducted by the Evangelization and Education Department in collaboration with the parishes will focus on the formation of the parish plan for evangelization. This workshop will include recommended procedures to develop the plan and a template for the parish to draft and submit its plan.
- In 2018, the Fall Evangelization Workshops conducted by the Evangelization and Education Department in collaboration with the parishes will focus on best practices to foster a personal encounter with Jesus and a life of prayer.
- In 2019, the Fall Evangelization Workshops conducted by the Evangelization and Education Department in collaboration with the parishes will focus on best practices to form a welcoming parish community.
- In 2020, the Fall Evangelization Workshops conducted by the Evangelization and Education Department in collaboration with the parishes will focus on best practices to form disciples in the faith.
- In 2021, the Fall Evangelization Workshops conducted by the Evangelization and Education Department in collaboration with the parishes will focus on best practices to form disciples for mission.
- The Tribunal will offer regional annulment workshops to assist those seeking to rectify their marital status.
- By October 1, 2017, a page on the diocesan website will be dedicated to listing best practices for evangelization as a resource for parishes and missions to assist them in forming and implementing their plans for evangelization.
- For the next five years, all diocesan programs and events (e.g., spring study day, hospitality lecture, secretary-bookkeeper workshop, principal meetings and school summer conference,

religious education and catechist formation, etc.), *The UP Catholic* and social media will include evangelization related topics.

- The next diocesan evangelization summit in 2019 will focus on the implementation of this pastoral letter.
- By Pentecost 2022, the religion curriculum for Catholic Schools and Religious Education will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, to include an emphasis on the kerygma, a personal encounter with Jesus and formation for mission to share one's faith with others.

F. Evaluation and Future Plans

- After Pentecost 2022 and the completion of the five-year plan, we will evaluate the progress and discern future directions for evangelization in the Diocese of Marquette. The evaluation will consist of examining the data on Mass attendance across the diocese and brainstorming sessions for future directions for evangelization at the annual priest convocation and the fall evangelization workshops.

Conclusion

Sisters and brothers in Christ, it is my hope that you all encounter Jesus anew, and that he bring you abundant joy, the *Joy of the Gospel*. May that joy inspire and permeate the sharing of your faith with others. As Pope Francis said,

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy. (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 1)

Let us pray for a New Pentecost in the Diocese of Marquette! Let us pray that the Holy Spirit come upon us anew, that by the transforming fire of his love he may fill us with the *Joy of the Gospel* and form us into Spirit-filled Evangelizers, as he transformed the Apostles on the day of Pentecost!

With prayers that your hearts be filled with the *Joy of the Gospel* and that you be transformed into Spirit-filled evangelizers, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ John F. Doerfler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend John F. Doerfler, STD, JCL
Bishop of Marquette

June 4, 2017
Feast of Pentecost