

# A Summer of New Life

*Daily Reflections for the Mission Ahead*

*St. Elizabeth & St. Andrew Catholic Parishes  
Diocese of Crookston*



---

# **A Summer of New Life**

*Daily Reflections for the Mission Ahead*

---

St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew Catholic Parishes  
Diocese of Crookston

Pentecost Sunday, May 24 — September 14, 2026

# Table of Contents

---

## Introduction

### **Week 1: The Pentecost Octave** (May 24 – May 30) **Day 1 — Pentecost Sunday — The**

#### **Breath of New Life**

Day 2 — Mary, Mother of the Church — The Bishop's Vision

Day 3 — Divine Renovation — Moving the Needle

Day 4 — The Engine of Renewal — Missional Prayer

Day 5 — ACTS XXIX — Missionaries of Hope

Day 6 — Authentic Discipleship

Day 7 — A Future Full of Hope

### **Week 2: The Call to Revive** (May 31 – June 6) **Day 8 — Trinity Sunday — A**

#### **Communion of Love**

Day 9 — Holy Discontent

Day 10 — The Source of All Revival

Day 11 — The Necessity of Encounter

Day 12 — The Power of Your Story

Day 13 — Praying for the Lost

Day 14 — The Journey of Accompaniment

### **Week 3: From Revival to Planning** (June 7 – June 13) **Day 15 — Corpus Christi — Food**

#### **for the Journey**

Day 16 — The Courage to Look at Reality

Day 17 — What is Parish Planning?

Day 18 — Collaboration over Competition

Day 19 — The Pain of Inaction

Day 20 — Trusting the God of the Loaves and Fishes

Day 21 — The Hour of the Laity

**Week 4: The Heart of the Mission** (June 14 – June 20) **Day 22 — Listening to the Spirit**

**Together**

- Day 23 — Surrendering Our Preferences
- Day 24 — Equipping the Saints
- Day 25 — The Primacy of Evangelization
- Day 26 — Creating Landing Spots
- Day 27 — A Time for Heroes
- Day 28 — A Future Full of Hope

**Week 5: The Reality of Our Mission Field** (June 21 – June 27) **Day 29 — The Heart of a**

**Father**

- Day 30 — Looking at the Numbers with Faith
- Day 31 — A Changing Landscape
- Day 32 — Making Straight the Path
- Day 33 — Sharing the Burden
- Day 34 — Healthy Conflict
- Day 35 — The Pruning Process

**Week 6: Preparing the Soil** (June 28 – July 4) **Day 36 — Leaving the Upper Room**

- Day 37 — United in Mission
- Day 38 — The Power of the Region
- Day 39 — Stewardship and Strategy
- Day 40 — Expectant Faith
- Day 41 — A Vision for the Future
- Day 42 — True Freedom

**Week 7: Building the Structure for Mission** (July 5 – July 11) **Day 43 — The Parish as a**

**Family**

- Day 44 — The Courage to Let Go
- Day 45 — Identifying Your Charisms
- Day 46 — Financing the Mission

Day 47 — Creating a Welcoming Culture

Day 48 — The Power of Invitation

Day 49 — St. Benedict and the Missionary Option

**Week 8: The Great Rescue Mission** (July 12 – July 18) **Day 50 — What is**

**Evangelization?**

Day 51 — The Power of the Kerygma

Day 52 — Step One — Created out of Love

Day 53 — Step Two — Captured by the Enemy

Day 54 — Step Three — Rescued by Jesus

Day 55 — Step Four — Our Response

Day 56 — We Are the 29th Chapter

**Week 9: Going Out to the Margins** (July 19 – July 25) **Day 57 — The Field Hospital**

Day 58 — The Corporal Works of Mercy

Day 59 — The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Day 60 — St. Mary Magdalene — Apostle to the Apostles

Day 61 — Accompanying the Broken

Day 62 — Living as Missionaries of Hope

Day 63 — Feast of St. James — The Pilgrim Church

**Week 10: The Everyday Missionary** (July 26 – August 1) **Day 64 — Saints Joachim and**

**Anne — The Domestic Church**

Day 65 — The Myth of the ‘Professional’ Catholic

Day 66 — The First Gospel People Read

Day 67 — St. Martha and the Gift of Hospitality

Day 68 — The Ministry of Listening

Day 69 — St. Ignatius and Finding God in All Things

Day 70 — The Ripple Effect

**Week 11: Overcoming the Fear** (August 2 – August 8) **Day 71 — Do Not Be Afraid**

Day 72 — The Measure of Success

Day 73 — St. John Vianney — The Power of Presence

Day 74 — Instruments of the Spirit

Day 75 — The Transfiguration — Glimpsing the Glory

Day 76 — The Power of Vulnerability

Day 77 — St. Dominic — Preaching with Joy

**Week 12: Nourished for the Journey** (August 9 – August 15) **Day 78 — We Cannot Give**

### **What We Do Not Have**

Day 79 — St. Lawrence — The True Treasure

Day 80 — St. Clare — The Power of the Hidden Life

Day 81 — Ite, Missa Est

Day 82 — Enduring the Dry Seasons

Day 83 — St. Maximilian Kolbe — The Cost of Love

Day 84 — The Assumption — Our Ultimate Hope

**Week 13: The Cost and Joy of Discipleship** (August 16 – August 22) **Day 85 — Counting**

### **the Cost**

Day 86 — The Joy of the Harvest

Day 87 — Reclaiming the Lord's Day

Day 88 — The Strength of the Pack

Day 89 — St. Bernard of Clairvaux — Passion for the Word

Day 90 — Pope St. Pius X — Restoring All Things in Christ

Day 91 — The Queenship of Mary

**Week 14: The Long Game** (August 23 – August 29) **Day 92 — Planting Shade Trees**

Day 93 — Feast of St. Bartholomew — Faithful in the Hidden Things

Day 94 — A Posture of Curiosity

Day 95 — The Patience of the Spirit

Day 96 — St. Monica — The Patroness of Persistence

Day 97 — St. Augustine — Our Restless Hearts

Day 98 — The Martyrdom of John the Baptist

**Week 15: Laboring for the Harvest** (August 30 – September 5) **Day 99 — The Vineyard**

**of the Lord**

Day 100 — The Dignity of Work

Day 101 — Overcoming Apathy

Day 102 — The Power of the Small

Day 103 — Pope St. Gregory the Great — Servant of the Servants

Day 104 — Finding the ‘Lost Coin’

Day 105 — St. Teresa of Calcutta — Small Things with Great Love

**Week 16: The Triumph of the Cross** (September 6 – September 14) **Day 106 — The**

**Illusion of Defeat**

Day 107 — The Courage to be Weak

Day 108 — The Nativity of Mary — The Dawn of Hope

Day 109 — Surrender as Strategy

Day 110 — The Kerygma as Our Compass

Day 111 — An Apostolic People

Day 112 — The Most Holy Name of Mary

Day 113 — The Eve of the Exaltation

Day 114 — The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

**Conclusion: The 29th Chapter**

**Resources**

## Introduction: A View from 5,000 Feet

If you have been paying attention to the news, the culture, or even the empty spaces in our own pews on Sunday morning, you already know the truth: the world is changing rapidly, and the Church is facing a profound challenge. Over the last decade, Mass attendance in the Diocese of Crookston has declined significantly. The culture around us no longer naturally supports a Christian way of life.

It is easy to look at these realities and feel discouraged. But God is not surprised by any of this. In fact, He created you specifically to be alive in this exact moment in history.

Recently, Bishop Andrew Cozzens released a powerful pastoral vision for our diocese titled *New Life through the Tender Compassion of Our God*. In it, he is calling every parish to undergo a massive, exciting shift. For generations, our parishes have operated in “maintenance mode”—focusing our energy, budgets, and schedules on taking care of those who are already inside the building. But the Gospel demands more. We are being called to shift from maintenance to *mission*.

We are being called to become an outward-facing rescue operation for a world that is starving for the love of Jesus Christ.

To accomplish this, our parishes are entering a season of planning. We are evaluating our structures, identifying our spiritual gifts, and learning how to collaborate across our region. We are drawing inspiration from global parish renewal movements like *Divine Renovation* and the urgent, Gospel-centered mission of *ACTS XXIX*.

But true renewal does not begin in a committee meeting. It begins in the heart. That is why this book was created.

## How to Use This Book

This book contains 114 short daily reflections, beginning on Pentecost Sunday (May 24) and concluding on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14). It is designed to give you a “5,000-foot view” of what parish renewal actually means, and how you personally fit into this great adventure.

You do not need a theology degree to read this book. You only need an open heart.

Each day, you are invited to:

1. **Read:** Take three minutes to read the day’s reflection. You can do this with your morning coffee, during your lunch break, or right before bed.
2. **Reflect:** Allow the core message to sink in. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how the day’s theme applies to your own life and

your own neighborhood.

3. **Pray:** Finish with the short prayer provided at the bottom of the page. This is the most important step. Missional, intercessory prayer is the absolute engine of parish renewal. If our entire parish family prays these prayers together every day this summer, the spiritual landscape of our community will fundamentally change.

Change is rarely easy, but the new life God has planned for our parishes is far greater than the comfort of the past. Thank you for joining us on this journey. Let us step out together in faith.



## **Week 1: The Pentecost Octave**

*May 24 – May 30, 2026*

## Day 1 — May 24

### *The Breath of New Life*

---

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, He did not find a group of confident strategists with a perfected master plan. He found ordinary, fearful men and women huddled in an upper room, unsure of how to proceed. Yet, with a rushing wind and tongues of fire, that small, frightened community was transformed into a bold, outward-facing Church that changed the course of human history.

Here at St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew, we are living in our own upper room moment. The world around us is changing rapidly, and the Church in our modern age faces unique, undeniable challenges. Yet, Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit is never stagnant. He is the principal agent of evangelization, breathing life into dry bones and offering fresh vision where there is uncertainty. As we look at the landscape of the Diocese of Crookston, we are not called to manage a decline; we are being invited by God to prepare for a new springtime of faith.

This week, we begin a summer-long journey of reflection on what it means to be a Catholic parish today. We will explore the sweeping vision our Bishop has laid out for us, the models of parish renewal inspiring our path, and our own personal call to action. But today,

our only task is to open the windows of our hearts. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same courage He gave the apostles—a courage that trusts entirely in God’s providence and desires nothing more than to share His love with the world.

**PRAYER**

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.*

## Day 2 — May 25

### *The Bishop's Vision*

---

If we are to move forward as a united diocesan family, we need a shared horizon. Bishop Andrew Cozzens has provided this horizon in his beautiful pastoral vision, *New Life through the Tender Compassion of Our God*. At its core, this letter is a loving but honest assessment of our current reality. The Bishop acknowledges the painful truth that fewer people are attending Mass today than a decade ago, and many of our family members and neighbors have drifted away from the faith.

However, the Bishop's letter is not a document of despair; it is a battle cry of hope. It calls us to shift our entire mindset from "maintenance" to "mission." For generations, our parishes have operated in a maintenance mode—focusing primarily on caring for those who are already sitting in the pews. But the Gospel demands more. We are called to look outward, to seek the lost, and to be a beacon of tender compassion to a hurting world.

Earlier this month, many gathered for our Prayer, Discernment, and Feedback sessions. The insights offered during those gatherings planted the seeds for this new missionary era. Like Mary, Mother of the Church, who pondered the mysteries of God in her heart, we too

are learning to listen to the Lord's promptings. Let us ask our Blessed Mother to help us embrace this season of profound renewal.

**PRAYER**

*Mary, Mother of the Church, guide our parishes. Help us to hear the cry of the lost and to respond with the tender compassion of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Day 3 — May 26

### *Moving the Needle*

---

To realize the Bishop's vision of *New Life*, we need a framework—a way to understand how a parish actually changes its culture. This is where the inspiration of the *Divine Renovation* ministry comes in. Founded by Fr. James Mallon, *Divine Renovation* is a movement that has helped thousands of Catholic parishes around the world transition out of a stagnant maintenance mindset and into a dynamic, missionary posture.

The *Divine Renovation* model suggests that parish renewal relies on three indispensable keys. The first is the Power of the Holy Spirit; without God's grace, our efforts are merely human administration. The second is the Primacy of Evangelization; making the conscious choice to prioritize reaching those outside our walls over simply keeping ourselves comfortable. The third is the Best of Leadership; recognizing that pastors cannot and should not carry the burden of parish renewal alone, but must share leadership with gifted lay people.

When we look at our own communities in Dilworth and Hawley from a 5,000-foot view, these three keys offer a roadmap. They challenge us to ask: Is our parish just a place where we consume spiritual goods, or is it a training ground that equips us to be

missionaries in our own neighborhoods? Embracing this model means having the courage to dream bigger and the humility to change how we operate, all for the sake of the Gospel.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, give us the courage to embrace the renewal of our parish. Grant us a deep reliance on the Holy Spirit, a burning zeal for evangelization, and the wisdom to lead together. Amen.*

## Day 4 — May 27

### *Missional Prayer*

---

One of the most profound shifts in moving from maintenance to mission is changing how we pray as a community. Often, our prayers are naturally focused inward: we pray for our own health, for our families, and for the specific needs of our parish ministries. These are good and necessary prayers. But a true missionary culture requires what is known as “missional prayer.”

Missional prayer is the engine of parish renewal. It is the deliberate, consistent practice of praying for the lost, the unchurched, and the broken in our local communities. It is asking God to actively transform the spiritual landscape of our region. When we engage in missional prayer, we are not just asking God to bless the plans we have already made; we are actively cooperating with the Holy Spirit, asking Him to shatter barriers and open hearts to the Gospel.

Imagine the impact if every family in our parish spent just a few minutes each day interceding for the people in our towns who do not know the love of Christ. Imagine praying for our local schools, workplaces, and civic leaders with the expectant faith that God wants to bring them new life. True renewal does not begin in a boardroom or a planning committee; it begins on our knees,

pleading for an outpouring of grace upon those who are spiritually starving.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, break our hearts for what breaks Yours.*

*Teach us to pray not only for our own needs, but with urgent, expectant faith for the salvation of our neighbors. Amen.*

## Day 5 — May 28

### *Missionaries of Hope*

---

As we broaden our view of what it means to be a Catholic today, we draw tremendous inspiration from another powerful movement in the Church: *ACTS XXIX*, led by Fr. John Riccardo. The name of this ministry is intentional. The biblical Book of Acts has 28 chapters, detailing the explosive, Spirit-led growth of the early Church. Chapter 29 is the unwritten chapter—it is the chapter that you and I are living and writing right now.

*ACTS XXIX* reminds us of a crucial reality: God created us for *this* specific moment in history. We are not alive today by accident. We live in an apostolic age, an era that closely resembles the time of the early Christians, where the broader culture no longer shares a Christian worldview. Rather than retreating in fear or complaining about the state of the world, we are called to step confidently into the breach as “missionaries of hope.”

The core message of *ACTS XXIX* is the *kerygma*—the explosive, life-changing proclamation of the Gospel. It is the truth that God created us out of love, that humanity was captured by sin and death, that Jesus Christ came on a rescue mission to defeat those enemies, and that He now invites us to respond and join Him in His work.

When we truly understand that we have been rescued by God, we cannot help but want to bring that rescue to others.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, remind me that I am alive in this specific time and place by Your divine design. Equip me to be a missionary of hope in a world that desperately needs Your light. Amen.*

## Day 6 — May 29

### *Authentic Discipleship*

---

All of these grand visions—the Bishop’s pastoral letter, *Divine Renovation*, the urgent call of *ACTS XXIX*—ultimately distill down to one foundational question for each of us: What does it mean to be an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ? A parish cannot be a center of mission if its members are not first committed disciples.

In his teachings on planning for mission, Bishop Cozzens emphasizes that an authentic disciple is someone who has intentionally surrendered their life to the Lord. It is someone who acknowledges Jesus not just as a historical figure, but as the active Lord and Savior of their daily life. This level of discipleship goes beyond merely attending Sunday Mass out of habit; it involves a continuous formation of the mind and heart.

To be an authentic disciple means we are willing to be accompanied by others, and willing to accompany them in return. It means we are learning to recognize the voice of the Shepherd, allowing Him to heal our wounds, and being equipped to share the story of what God has done in our lives. As our diocese plans for the future, the ultimate metric of our success will not simply be balanced budgets or maintained buildings, but the number of hearts that are set completely on fire for Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, I surrender my life to You afresh today. Form my mind, heal my heart, and teach me what it truly means to follow You as an authentic disciple. Amen.*

## Day 7 — May 30

### *A Future Full of Hope*

---

As we conclude this first week of reflections, we zoom out to look at the vast, beautiful expanse of the Diocese of Crookston. From the Canadian border down to the southern farming communities, we are a diverse family of faith. The *Planning for Mission* process we are undertaking is not a corporate downsizing exercise; it is a profound spiritual journey to ensure that the Catholic faith thrives in northwest Minnesota for generations to come.

This process will require collaboration over competition. It will require us to look beyond our own parish boundaries and ask what is best for the entire region. We will be called to pool our gifts, share our resources, and perhaps let go of some familiar ways of doing things so that new life can emerge.

But we do this with immense hope. We are not a people of fear; we are an Easter people. The same Holy Spirit that hovered over the waters of creation, that descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, and that has sustained the Church for two millennia is actively at work in our diocese today. Let us walk forward together, confident that the Lord has incredible plans for our parishes, and that the best days of the Church are not behind us, but ahead.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, grant us a spirit of unity and bold faith as we plan for the future. May all our efforts bring about a new springtime of evangelization in our diocese. Amen.*



## **Week 2: The Call to Revive**

*May 31 – June 6, 2026*

## Day 8 — May 31

### *Trinity Sunday — A Communion of Love*

---

Today the Church celebrates Trinity Sunday, reflecting on the profound mystery that God is not a solitary figure in the sky, but a dynamic communion of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are created in the image and likeness of this Triune God. This means that, at our very core, we are wired for communion. We are not meant to live our faith in isolation.

When Bishop Cozzens introduces the first pillar of his *New Life* vision—the call to “Revive”—he is essentially calling us back to this deep, divine communion. Over the years, it has become easy for faith to be treated as a private matter, something we do quietly for an hour on Sunday. But a true revival requires us to rediscover the parish as a family. It requires us to look around the pews at St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew and see not just fellow attendees, but brothers and sisters with whom we are journeying toward heaven.

Revival begins when we allow the love of the Trinity to spill over into our relationships with one another. When a parish community truly loves one another, bears one another’s burdens, and rejoices in each other’s triumphs, it becomes magnetic. As we pray for the renewal of our diocese, let us ask the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to

bind us together so tightly in love that our local community cannot help but notice.

**PRAYER**

*Triune God, You are a perfect communion of love. Draw our parish family into that same love, that we might be a visible, joyful sign of Your presence in our towns. Amen.*

## Day 9 — June 1

### *Holy Discontent*

---

When we look honestly at the state of the world and the struggles of the broader Church, it is easy to feel discouraged. The *New Life* pastoral vision does not shy away from the hard numbers: declining Mass attendance and friends or family members who have drifted away. But God does not want us to sit in despair. He wants to transform our sadness into what spiritual writers call a “holy discontent.”

Holy discontent is a spiritual wake-up call. It is the deep, persistent feeling that things are not as they should be, paired with the unshakeable faith that God has the power to change them. It is the refusal to accept the spiritual decline of our region as inevitable. When we channel this holy discontent into our daily prayer, it becomes the fuel for revival.

Instead of complaining about the culture, we are invited to bring our ache for the lost directly to the Lord. We ask Him to hover over our parishes just as His Spirit hovered over the waters of creation. We plead with Him to breathe new life into dry bones. Revival always begins in the hearts of everyday believers who simply decide that they desire more for their neighbors than what the world is currently offering them.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, give me a holy discontent for the spiritual health of my community. Let my ache for those who are away from You drive me to my knees in hopeful, urgent prayer. Amen.*

## Day 10 — June 2

### *The Source of All Revival*

---

There has never been a true spiritual revival in the history of the Catholic Church that was not profoundly rooted in the Holy Eucharist. As we focus on reviving our faith life, we must always return to the altar. The Mass is not merely a ritual we perform; it is the very heartbeat of our faith, the source and summit of the Christian life.

In recent years, the Church in the United States has been journeying through a National Eucharistic Revival. This movement is a reminder that Jesus Christ is truly, physically, and completely present in the Blessed Sacrament. If we want our parishes to be vibrant centers of mission, we must first allow ourselves to be captivated by Jesus in the Eucharist. We must approach Him with wonder and awe.

When we receive communion, or when we spend quiet time in Eucharistic Adoration, we are doing far more than fulfilling a religious duty. We are being nourished for a rescue mission. The love we receive from the altar is the exact same love we are commanded to carry out the church doors and into the streets of Dilworth, Hawley, and beyond. Revival happens when the grace of the Eucharist overflows the walls of the sanctuary.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, give me a renewed awe for Your True Presence in the Eucharist. Nourish my soul so that I may be strengthened to carry Your love to a hungry world. Amen.*

## Day 11 — June 3

### *The Necessity of Encounter*

---

You can know all the facts about a person without actually knowing them. You can read a biography of a famous historical figure, memorize their achievements, and quote their speeches, but you do not have a relationship with them. Sadly, it is possible to treat our Catholic faith in much the same way. We can know the rules, memorize the prayers, and understand the theology, without ever truly knowing Jesus.

The foundation of the *Divine Renovation* movement, and the heart of Bishop Cozzens' vision, is the necessity of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Christianity is not a philosophy; it is a relationship with a living Person. The *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that God so loved the world that He launched a rescue mission to save us from sin and death, and He invites us to respond to that rescue personally.

To revive our parishes, we must ask ourselves: Have I truly encountered the Lord? Have I surrendered the steering wheel of my life to Him? This is what it means to be an authentic disciple. It requires us to move from knowing *about* Jesus to knowing Him as our personal Lord, Savior, and friend. If you feel your faith has

become dry or routine, simply ask Him to reveal Himself to you anew today.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, I do not want to just know about You; I want to know You. Reveal Your heart to me today, and help me to surrender my life completely to Your care. Amen.*

## Day 12 — June 4

### *The Power of Your Story*

---

One of the most powerful tools God has given the Church for evangelization is not a theological textbook or a brilliant apologetics argument. It is your personal story. When we read the Acts of the Apostles, we see early Christians simply sharing what they had seen and heard. They boldly shared their testimonies of how encountering the risen Jesus had changed their lives.

As we seek to build a missionary culture, we have to become comfortable talking about God's activity in our own lives. You do not need a degree in theology to tell someone what Jesus has done for you. You only need the courage to be vulnerable. Perhaps God comforted you in a time of deep grief, provided for you in a moment of anxiety, or freed you from a cycle of sin. That story is a precious gift.

Many people in our modern world are skeptical of institutions, but they are incredibly hungry for authenticity. When you share a genuine testimony of God's grace, it breaks down walls. It shows others that faith is real, tangible, and available to them. A revived parish is a community where people are constantly and joyfully sharing the stories of God's goodness with one another and with the world.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, give me the courage to share my story. Help me to recognize the ways You have moved in my life, and grant me the boldness to speak of Your goodness to others. Amen.*

## Day 13 — June 5

### *Praying for the Lost*

---

We have reflected on the importance of “missional prayer” as the engine of parish renewal. But what does missional prayer actually look like in our daily lives? It begins by shifting our focus outward.

Take a moment to think of three people in your life who do not currently know the Lord, or who have drifted away from the Church. It might be a family member, a coworker, or a neighbor down the street. Write their names down. Now, commit to praying for them every single day. Do not pray that they simply “become better people,” but pray urgently that they would experience a life-changing encounter with the love of Jesus Christ.

When we pray for the lost, we are aligning our hearts with the very heart of God, who desires that all be saved. We are asking the Holy Spirit to prepare the soil of their hearts, to remove obstacles, and to create opportunities for grace. We must never underestimate the hidden, explosive power of intercessory prayer. Long before a parish experiences visible growth, the spiritual groundwork is laid by faithful men and women praying quietly and persistently for the souls in their community.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, I lift up to You the people in my life who are far from Your love. Soften their hearts, remove their doubts, and use me as an instrument to invite them home. Amen.*

## Day 14 — June 6

### *The Journey of Accompaniment*

---

Revival is not an event; it is a journey. And it is a journey we are not meant to walk alone. Pope Francis often speaks of the “art of accompaniment”—the willingness to walk alongside another person through the messiness and joy of life. This is a critical component of Bishop Cozzens’ vision for our diocese.

If we want to transform our parishes into vibrant mission centers, we must foster spaces where deep accompaniment can happen. This often takes the form of small groups. When we gather in small, intentional communities to pray, read Scripture, and share our lives, we move out of the anonymous crowd of Sunday morning and into genuine fellowship. We learn to listen to one another, to challenge one another to grow in holiness, and to support each other in our struggles.

Accompaniment requires patience. It means walking at the pace of the other person, just as Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus—listening to their fears before revealing the truth. Let us ask the Lord to show us who He is calling us to accompany in this season, and who might be called to accompany us.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, You walked patiently with Your disciples. Teach our parish the art of accompaniment, that we might journey together toward a deeper, more revived faith. Amen.*



## **Week 3: From Revival to Planning**

*June 7 – June 13, 2026*

## Day 15 — June 7

### *Corpus Christi — Food for the Journey*

---

Today, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. As we reflect on the call to revive our parishes, it is fitting that we anchor ourselves here. The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect; it is powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. It is the very presence of Jesus Christ, dwelling among us to sustain us on our earthly pilgrimage.

When we talk about transitioning our parishes from maintenance to mission, we are talking about embarking on a great and challenging journey. A rescue mission requires energy, resilience, and profound grace. If we attempt to plan for the future of our diocese relying only on our own cleverness or human strength, we will quickly burn out. We must be fed by the Bread of Life.

As we receive Communion today, let us ask the Lord to enlarge our hearts. Let us pray that the grace we receive at the altar does not stop at the church doors, but overflows into our homes, our workplaces, and our neighborhoods. A truly revived parish is one that understands that the Eucharist is the starting line, sending us out to be the hands and feet of Christ in a world desperate for His presence.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, nourish me today.*

*Give me the spiritual stamina required to be a joyful  
missionary in my community. Amen.*

## Day 16 — June 8

### *The Courage to Look at Reality*

---

In the *New Life* pastoral vision, Bishop Cozzens presents us with a sobering reality. The landscape of our faith community has changed drastically. Over the last decade, we have seen a significant decline in Mass attendance across our region. We are facing a future with fewer priests available to serve our communities. These are difficult truths to face.

Yet, as Christians, we are uniquely equipped to look at hard realities without falling into despair. We follow a Savior who faced the brutal reality of the Cross because He knew it was the path to the Resurrection. We do not need to hide from the facts and figures of our diocese, nor do we need to assign blame. Acknowledging our current situation is simply the necessary first step in allowing God to do something entirely new.

This is the bridge between reviving our hearts and planning for our future. We must look at our limited resources—our buildings, our finances, and our clergy—and ask the Holy Spirit how He wants us to use them *now*, in this present moment, for the greatest evangelistic impact. It takes courage to look at the numbers, but it takes faith to believe that God is already preparing a victorious path forward.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, give us the courage to see our reality clearly and the faith to trust that You are holding the future of our diocese in Your hands. Amen.*

## Day 17 — June 9

### *What is Parish Planning?*

---

When we hear the phrase “parish planning,” it is easy to imagine a corporate boardroom. We might think of spreadsheets, budget cuts, and strategic restructuring. While good stewardship of our resources is certainly part of the equation, true pastoral planning is something much deeper. It is a profound act of communal discernment.

Planning for mission means gathering as a community to listen to the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual exercise where we ask God: “What do You want our parish to look like in five years? How can we best reach the lost in our specific towns?” The *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that God is the divine architect; our job is to read His blueprints, not draw our own and ask Him to sign off on them.

As our local leaders and the Diocesan Planning Commission work together this year, they are engaging in this deep listening. They are evaluating how to align every single thing we do—from our Mass schedules to our religious education programs—with the primary goal of bringing people to Jesus Christ. Let us support them by blanketing their efforts in prayer, asking the Lord to grant them crystal-clear vision.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, guide all those entrusted with planning the future of our parishes. Give them supernatural wisdom, unity, and a bold vision for Your Kingdom. Amen.*

## Day 18 — June 10

### *Collaboration over Competition*

---

For generations, Catholic parishes have often operated like independent islands. We have been fiercely loyal to our own specific church buildings, our own parish festivals, and our own local traditions. This loyalty is a beautiful expression of community. However, the missionary age we are living in demands a broader horizon.

If we are going to thrive in the coming decades, we must shift our mindset from “my parish” to “our regional family.” The *Planning for Mission* process asks us to look across town lines and county borders. How can St. Elizabeth, St. Andrew, and our neighboring parishes collaborate? Can we share ministries? Can we pool our resources to create a more dynamic youth program or a more robust outreach to the poor?

This kind of collaboration requires profound humility. It means rejoicing when a neighboring parish succeeds, and being willing to share our own gifts generously. It means realizing that we are all on the same team, fighting the same spiritual battle. When we break down the invisible walls between our communities and work together, we become a far more effective witness to the unifying love of Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, expand my vision. Help me to see beyond the walls of my own parish and to embrace all the faithful in our region as brothers and sisters in mission. Amen.*

## Day 19 — June 11

### *The Pain of Inaction*

---

Change is universally difficult. It is human nature to cling to what is familiar, even when the familiar is no longer working. As we discuss new models of parish life and potential structural shifts, it is entirely normal to feel a sense of apprehension. Bishop Cozzens acknowledges this plainly: moving from a culture of maintenance to a culture of mission is hard work.

But there is a profound truth we must also face: while change is hard, *not* changing will ultimately be much harder. The pain of slowly managing the decline of a parish—watching the pews empty and the joy fade—is a sorrow God does not desire for us. He is offering us a lifeline, an opportunity to restructure for growth and vitality.

The *Divine Renovation* network has seen thousands of parishes face this exact crossroads. Those that courageously embrace necessary changes discover a wellspring of new life. Those that refuse to change out of fear eventually lose the very things they were trying so desperately to protect. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to let go of our fear, trusting that the new life He has planned for us is far greater than the comfort of the past.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, I confess that change often makes me anxious. Replace my fear with expectant hope. Help our parish to boldly embrace whatever shifts are necessary to serve You better.  
Amen.*

## Day 20 — June 12

### *Trusting the God of the Loaves and Fishes*

---

When we look at the immense task of evangelizing our culture with fewer priests and strained resources, we can easily feel like the disciples in the Gospel looking at a massive, hungry crowd with only five loaves and two fish. The math simply does not seem to add up. How can we possibly fulfill this great mission with so little?

The answer lies in the hands of the One we offer our resources to. Jesus did not ask the disciples to magically produce enough food; He simply asked them to hand over what little they had. When they surrendered their meager resources to Him, He blessed it, broke it, and multiplied it until there was more than enough for everyone.

This is the exact posture we must take in our diocesan planning. We must honestly assess our “loaves and fishes”—our volunteer hours, our finances, our clergy—and place them entirely in the hands of the Lord. If we try to hoard our resources out of a scarcity mindset, they will never be enough. But if we generously offer them for the sake of the mission, God will multiply our efforts in ways that defy human logic.

**PRAYER**

*Lord of abundance, we offer You our parish, our resources, and our lives. Take what little we have, bless it, and multiply it for the salvation of our communities. Amen.*

## Day 21 — June 13

### *The Hour of the Laity*

---

For much of recent Catholic history, it was assumed that the primary work of ministry belonged to the priest. The priest ran the parish, led the programs, and handled the evangelization, while the laity primarily attended and supported his efforts. The changing realities of our diocese make it abundantly clear that this model is no longer sustainable.

But this is not a crisis; it is a profound theological correction. The Second Vatican Council clearly taught that every single baptized Christian is called to holiness and mission. The *Divine Renovation* model emphasizes that the “Best of Leadership” involves lay people stepping fully into their baptismal calling. This is the hour of the laity.

Your parish needs your specific gifts. Whether you have a background in financial management, a charism for intercessory prayer, a talent for hospitality, or a gift for teaching, the Holy Spirit has equipped you to help lead your parish into the future. Planning for mission means creating a culture where the pastor is supported by a dynamic team of lay leaders, sharing the burden and the joy of ministry together.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, reveal to me the specific gifts You have given me.  
Give me the courage to step forward and offer my talents for  
the building up of my parish family. Amen.*



## **Week 4: The Heart of the Mission**

*June 14 – June 20, 2026*

## Day 22 — June 14

### *Listening to the Spirit Together*

---

We have discussed that parish planning is not a corporate exercise but a spiritual discernment. But how do we actually do that? How does a community of hundreds of people “listen to the Holy Spirit”? It begins with a willingness to engage in honest, prayerful dialogue.

In the Church, this process of walking and listening together is often called *synodality*. It means that before any major decisions are made about the future of our local parishes, leaders must hear the voices, the hopes, and the concerns of the faithful. This is why the Prayer, Discernment, and Feedback sessions were so vital. The Holy Spirit does not only speak to the pastor or the bishop; He speaks through the lived experience and the prayers of the entire baptized community.

True listening requires us to quiet our own agendas. It means coming to the table not to demand our own way, but to genuinely seek what God is saying through our brothers and sisters. As our local planning teams synthesize the feedback they have received, let us pray that they are granted a profound sensitivity to the movements of the Spirit, ensuring that our next steps are guided by divine wisdom.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, teach our parish how to truly listen. Help us to hear Your voice in the quiet of our hearts, and in the wisdom of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.*

## Day 23 — June 15

### *Surrendering Our Preferences*

---

One of the greatest obstacles to parish renewal is our own comfort. Over the years, we naturally develop strong preferences about how things should be done. We prefer a certain Mass time, a certain pew, a specific style of communication, or a particular parish event. These traditions are comforting, but they can become dangerous if they become more important to us than the mission itself.

To become a truly mission-centered parish, we must regularly practice the difficult art of surrender. We must be willing to ask: “Does this program, this schedule, or this tradition actually help bring new people to Jesus, or does it just keep me comfortable?”

Fr. John Riccardo and the *ACTS XXIX* team often remind us that the early Christians turned the world upside down because they were entirely unattached to their own preferences; they were attached only to Christ. If adjusting a Mass schedule or merging a program with a neighboring parish means we can better utilize our resources to reach the lost, we must be willing to let go of our preferences with a joyful and generous spirit.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, I surrender my preferences to You. Detach me from my comfort zones, and give me a heart that cares only for the advancement of Your Kingdom. Amen.*

## Day 24 — June 16

### *Equipping the Saints*

---

A parish should not be a spiritual retirement community where we go to rest; it should be a training ground where we are equipped for battle. St. Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians that the role of Church leaders is “to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

As we plan for the future, we must evaluate how well we are equipping our parishioners. Are we simply providing religious goods and services, or are we actively training our people to share their faith, pray with their neighbors, and serve the poor? A maintenance-driven parish focuses on keeping people in the building; a mission-driven parish focuses on sending them out.

Every homily, every religious education class, and every parish event should be evaluated by this metric: Is this equipping our people to be everyday missionaries? When a parish shifts its focus to intentionally forming and sending out its members, the impact on the surrounding community is profound and undeniable.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, transform our parish into a true training ground. Equip me with the knowledge, the courage, and the deep love required to share Your Gospel with the world. Amen.*

## Day 25 — June 17

### *The Primacy of Evangelization*

---

In the *Divine Renovation* framework, the second key to parish renewal is the “Primacy of Evangelization.” This means that reaching the lost must be the absolute priority of the parish. It cannot be just one ministry among many; it must be the lens through which every decision is made.

This is a radical shift. It means that when the Parish Pastoral Council or Finance Council meets, the first question on the table should be, “How does this budget or this initiative help us evangelize?” It means prioritizing resources, staff time, and energy toward outreach, even if it means scaling back on inward-facing activities.

Evangelization is not a sales pitch; it is an introduction to a Person. It is bringing our friends, family, and coworkers into contact with the life-changing love of Jesus. If we truly believe that Jesus is the answer to the deepest aches of the human heart, then keeping Him to ourselves is not just selfish; it is a tragedy. Let us make evangelization the undisputed priority of our parish life.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, ignite a fire of evangelization in our parish.  
May everything we do—our planning, our budgets, and our  
ministries—be directed toward bringing souls to You. Amen.*

## Day 26 — June 18

### *Creating Landing Spots*

---

If we take the call to evangelize seriously, we must be prepared for the results. When we go out and invite our neighbors, our fallen-away family members, and those searching for meaning to encounter Christ, where exactly are we inviting them to?

Deacon Mark Krejci, in his teachings for our diocese, highlights the absolute necessity of creating “landing spots.” For someone who has been away from the Church for twenty years, or who has never known Jesus, inviting them immediately to Sunday Mass can be overwhelming. The liturgy can feel like a foreign country where they don’t know the language or the customs.

A mission-centered parish intentionally creates hospitable, low-pressure environments where seekers can ask questions, share a meal, and experience Christian community before they are ready for the sacramental life. This might be a small group, a parish alpha course, or a community service event. We must prepare our parishes to be welcoming homes for those who are taking their very first, tentative steps back toward God.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, help us to create warm, welcoming spaces for those who are searching for You. Give us the grace of radical hospitality, that no one would feel like a stranger in our midst. Amen.*

## Day 27 — June 19

### *A Time for Heroes*

---

It is easy to look at the headlines, the cultural shifts, and the struggles of the modern Church and feel a sense of defeat. We might be tempted to wish we lived in a different, simpler era. But the *ACTS XXIX* ministry issues a powerful, prophetic reminder: God chose *you* to be alive right now.

You were not created for the 1950s, the Middle Ages, or the early days of the Apostles. God, in His infinite wisdom, knew exactly what the world would look like in 2026, and He decided that the world needed you. He has equipped you for this specific missionary epoch.

This is not a time for retreat; it is a time for heroes. It is a time for ordinary men and women to step up, to pray boldly, and to bear joyful witness to the truth of the Gospel. As we engage in the heavy lifting of parish planning, let us reject cynicism and embrace the incredible adventure of being called to rebuild the Church in our generation.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I thank You for creating me for this specific time in history. Banish my fear and cynicism, and raise me up to be a joyful, courageous hero for Your Kingdom. Amen.*

## Day 28 — June 20

### *A Future Full of Hope*

---

As we close our fourth week of reflections, we return to the heart of Bishop Cozzens' *New Life* pastoral vision. The entire purpose of this intense season of prayer, discernment, and planning is to secure a future full of hope for the Diocese of Crookston.

We are not just planning to keep the lights on for the next five years. We are planting seeds for shade trees we may never sit under. We are doing the hard work of restructuring and renewal so that our children and our grandchildren will inherit a vibrant, passionately Catholic culture in northwest Minnesota.

This is generational work. It requires sacrifice, patience, and unyielding trust in the Holy Spirit. As we look toward the remainder of the summer, let us renew our commitment to this journey. Let us walk together, shoulder to shoulder, confident that the Lord who began this good work in our diocese will bring it to glorious completion.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, we place the future of our parishes entirely in Your hands. Grant us the perseverance to plant the seeds of renewal today, trusting in Your harvest tomorrow. Amen.*



## **Week 5: The Reality of Our Mission Field**

*June 21 – June 27, 2026*

## Day 29 — June 21

### *The Heart of a Father*

---

As we celebrate Father's Day today, we are reminded of the very title of our Bishop's pastoral vision: *New Life through the Tender Compassion of Our God*. God is not a distant manager of the universe; He is a loving Father. When He looks out at our local communities in Dilworth, Hawley, and the surrounding areas, He does not see statistics or demographic shifts. He sees His beloved children, many of whom have wandered away from home.

When a father realizes his children are missing, he does not sit comfortably in his living room and hope they eventually find their way back. He goes out searching. He mobilizes his household. This is the exact heartbeat behind our diocesan planning process. We are being asked to align our parish households with the searching, tender, and urgent heart of God the Father.

Our planning efforts—restructuring our ministries, evaluating our budgets, and organizing our leadership—are not ends in themselves. They are simply the practical ways we organize our search party. Let us pray today that our hearts would break for the things that break the heart of our Heavenly Father, and that we would be filled with His tender compassion for the lost.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, fill me with Your tender compassion. Help our parish to reflect Your fatherly love to a world that is desperate to know it belongs to You. Amen.*

## Day 30 — June 22

### *Looking at the Numbers with Faith*

---

As part of the *Planning for Mission* process, our local leaders have been reviewing a comprehensive *Facts and Figures Report* for the Diocese of Crookston. This report details our current realities regarding demographics, clergy projections, and sacramental trends. Looking closely at this kind of data can sometimes feel discouraging, as it plainly shows the decline in our numbers over the last decade.

However, as Christians, we are called to look at reality through the lens of faith, not fear. We must be fiercely realistic about where we are, while remaining relentlessly optimistic about what God can do. Understanding our data is simply an act of good stewardship. A doctor cannot prescribe a cure without first taking an honest look at the symptoms.

We serve a God who is intimately familiar with impossible odds. The early Church started with a handful of flawed men and women in a hostile empire, yet the Holy Spirit used them to change the world. The numbers in our diocesan report do not dictate our future; they simply show us the starting line for our rescue mission.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, give us the courage to face our current challenges without giving in to fear. Help us to trust that You are actively charting a path forward for our diocese. Amen.*

## Day 31 — June 23

### *A Changing Landscape*

---

One of the most significant realities we face as a regional Church is the shifting landscape of clergy availability. The projections for the coming years indicate that we will have fewer priests serving our diocese. For many of us who grew up in an era where every parish had its own resident pastor, this is a difficult adjustment.

Yet, throughout the history of the Church, times of apparent scarcity have often been the precise moments when the Holy Spirit sparks profound renewal. The *Divine Renovation* movement teaches us that the transition away from a “priest-does-it-all” model is actually an opportunity to rediscover the true nature of the Church. It forces us to remember that the mission belongs to all of us.

When priests are freed from trying to manage every single administrative and ministerial detail of multiple parishes, they are freed to focus on their primary calling: providing the Sacraments, preaching the Gospel, and casting a spiritual vision. This changing landscape is an urgent invitation for the laity to step up and joyfully co-lead the revitalization of our communities.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, we pray for our priests. Give them strength, wisdom, and peace. Raise up lay men and women in our parish willing to share the yoke of leadership and ministry. Amen.*

## Day 32 — June 24

### *Making Straight the Path*

---

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. John's entire life was defined by a single, burning mission: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." He was the precursor, the one who did the hard, unglamorous work in the wilderness so that when Jesus arrived, the people were ready to receive Him.

In many ways, the *Planning for Mission* process is our "John the Baptist" moment. Restructuring parish councils, discovering operational efficiencies, and collaborating with neighboring parishes might not always feel like highly spiritual work. But it is the necessary clearing of the brush. It is removing the organizational obstacles so that the Gospel can run swiftly through our region.

We are making straight the paths in our parishes so that when our neighbors hear the message of the *ACTS XXIX* rescue mission, they will encounter a Church that is organized, welcoming, and ready to walk with them. Let us embrace the practical work of planning as a holy task of preparation.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, give us the spirit of St. John the Baptist. Help us to clear away the clutter and inefficiencies in our parish life, so that we may better prepare the way for Your grace. Amen.*

## Day 33 — June 25

### *Sharing the Burden*

---

If you have ever tried to carry a heavy piece of furniture by yourself, you know how quickly exhaustion sets in. If you add just one or two other people to help carry the load, the task becomes entirely manageable. For too long, the culture of our parishes has expected the pastor to carry the entire weight of parish renewal on his own shoulders.

A central principle of the *Divine Renovation* model is the establishment of a Senior Leadership Team. This is a small group of trusted lay leaders who walk closely with the pastor, not just to advise him, but to actively share the burden of leadership. They pray together, cast vision together, and make the difficult strategic decisions together.

This model of shared leadership requires tremendous trust and vulnerability. It means moving away from the idea of the parish as a dictatorship and moving toward a model of spiritual teamwork. As our diocese plans for the future, fostering these collaborative leadership structures will be absolutely essential to keeping our parishes vibrant and our pastors healthy.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, You sent Your disciples out two by two, knowing they needed one another. Teach our parish leaders how to genuinely share the burdens and joys of ministry together. Amen.*

## Day 34 — June 26

### *Healthy Conflict*

---

Whenever a group of passionate people comes together to plan for the future, disagreements are inevitable. As our parish and diocesan planning teams review feedback and propose new ways of operating, there will naturally be differing opinions. Often, in Church settings, we try to avoid conflict at all costs because we mistakenly believe that “being nice” is the same thing as being holy.

But avoiding difficult conversations only leads to stagnation.

Healthy, respectful conflict is actually a necessary ingredient for deep discernment. It is the friction that polishes the stone. When we humbly bring our different perspectives to the table and rigorously debate the best way to reach the lost, we allow the Holy Spirit to refine our vision.

The key to navigating this friction is keeping our eyes firmly fixed on the mission. If our ultimate goal is the salvation of souls, we can easily let go of our egos and personal preferences when a better idea is presented. Let us pray that all our planning meetings are characterized by radical honesty, mutual respect, and a total surrender to God’s will.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, grant our parish leaders the courage to engage in honest, productive dialogue. Keep our eyes focused on Your mission, so that our disagreements may lead to deeper wisdom. Amen.*

## Day 35 — June 27

### *The Pruning Process*

---

In the Gospel of John, Jesus uses the image of the vine and the branches. He tells us that every branch that bears fruit, the Father prunes, so that it may bear more fruit. Pruning is a violent process. It involves cutting away living parts of the plant. To the untrained eye, it looks like destruction, but the gardener knows it is the absolute prerequisite for an abundant harvest.

As we evaluate our parish ministries and programs through the lens of the Bishop's pastoral vision, we must be prepared for the pruning shears. We may discover that certain events, committees, or traditions—while good and historically meaningful—are no longer effectively bearing the fruit of making disciples.

It takes profound courage for a parish to lovingly lay a cherished program to rest so that energy and resources can be redirected toward active evangelization. We must trust the Divine Gardener. If we are willing to endure the temporary pain of pruning our parish structures, we will eventually witness a breathtaking explosion of new life.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, give us the wisdom to recognize what needs to be pruned in our parish. Grant us the courage to let go of the good, so that we might make room for the great work You want to do. Amen.*



## **Week 6: Preparing the Soil**

*June 28 – July 4, 2026*

## Day 36 — June 28

### *Leaving the Upper Room*

---

After the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples at Pentecost, they did not stay in the Upper Room. The room was safe, comfortable, and full of their closest friends. But the Spirit immediately propelled them out into the noisy, dangerous streets of Jerusalem to proclaim the Gospel.

Parishes naturally have an “Upper Room” gravity. We love the comfort of our familiar pews, the fellowship of the people we already know, and the predictability of our routines. But the *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that the Church is not a club for the convinced; it is a rescue mission for the lost.

As we plan for the future of the Diocese of Crookston, every structural decision must be evaluated by how well it helps us leave the Upper Room. Does our parish schedule make it easier for seekers to encounter us? Does our budget prioritize outreach over our own comfort? We cannot fulfill the Great Commission if we refuse to step outside our own doors.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, disrupt my comfort. Give our parish the boldness of the early apostles to leave the safety of our routines and joyfully engage the community around us. Amen.*

## Day 37 — June 29

### *United in Mission*

---

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, the two great pillars of the early Church. It is fascinating to realize that these two men were vastly different in personality, background, and approach. At times, they even sharply disagreed on matters of pastoral strategy. Yet, they were fiercely united in their ultimate mission: proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

As we collaborate with neighboring parishes in our deanery to form a regional plan, we will encounter different parish cultures, different ways of praying, and different pastoral approaches. St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew each have their own unique, beautiful identities.

The goal of diocesan planning is not to force everyone into an identical mold. The goal is unity in mission, not uniformity in style. Like Peter and Paul, we must learn to appreciate the diverse charisms of our neighboring communities while linking arms to tackle the shared challenge of evangelizing our region. When diverse parishes work together in harmony, the witness to the world is incredibly powerful.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, thank You for the diverse gifts of the parishes in our diocese. Help us to celebrate our differences while remaining totally united in the mission of evangelization. Amen.*

## Day 38 — June 30

### *The Power of the Region*

---

For a long time, the standard unit of Catholic life was the standalone parish. If a parish needed a youth group, it built its own. If it needed a marriage prep program, it created its own. But in an apostolic age with limited resources, this “island” mentality often leads to burnout and duplicated efforts.

The *New Life* pastoral vision asks us to zoom out and look at our resources regionally. Imagine the impact if, instead of three struggling, under-resourced youth groups in neighboring towns, those parishes combined their efforts, shared their volunteers, and pooled their finances to create one dynamic, magnetic youth ministry.

This kind of regional thinking requires us to dismantle the invisible walls of territorial pride. It asks us to rejoice when a family from our parish attends an incredible program the next town over, recognizing that we are all part of the same Body of Christ. By sharing our strengths across the region, we multiply our impact exponentially.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, break down the walls of territorial pride in my heart. Show us the beautiful possibilities that await when our parishes combine our resources for Your glory. Amen.*

## Day 39 — July 1

### *Stewardship and Strategy*

---

The word “efficiency” often feels out of place in a church setting. It sounds like corporate language, far removed from the spiritual realities of prayer and sacraments. But true efficiency is simply another word for good stewardship. It is the recognition that the resources God has given us—our money, our volunteer hours, and our buildings—are sacred and limited.

When the Diocesan Planning Commission asks parishes to seek operational efficiencies, they are asking a profoundly spiritual question: Are we burying our talents in the ground, or are we investing them wisely for the Kingdom?

If two parishes sharing a staff member means more funds are freed up to feed the poor or launch an evangelization course, then that administrative efficiency is a massive spiritual victory. Good strategy honors God because it maximizes our ability to love our neighbors. Let us support our leaders as they do the hard work of aligning our resources with our mission.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, You have entrusted us with precious resources. Give our parish and diocesan leaders the strategic wisdom to use every dollar and every hour for the maximum impact of the Gospel. Amen.*

## Day 40 — July 2

### *Expectant Faith*

---

As we continue the deep work of missional prayer for our region, it is crucial to examine the posture of our hearts. When we pray for our neighbors to come to know Christ, or when we pray for the success of our diocesan planning, do we actually expect God to answer? Or are we just reciting words out of a sense of duty?

In the Gospels, Jesus constantly praises the *expectant* faith of the people who come to Him. The woman who touched His cloak, the centurion who asked for healing for his servant—they didn't just hope Jesus might do something; they fully expected Him to act.

When we engage in missional prayer for Dilworth and Hawley, we must pray with that same audacious expectation. We must believe that the Holy Spirit is already at work in the hearts of the people we are praying for, preparing them to receive the Gospel. When a parish prays with expectant faith, the atmosphere changes, and miracles begin to happen.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, increase my faith. When I pray for the renewal of our parish and the salvation of my neighbors, help me to pray with the absolute certainty that You are already moving. Amen.*

## Day 41 — July 3

### *A Vision for the Future*

---

There is a famous proverb that says, “A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit.” This captures the exact essence of our *Planning for Mission* process. The work we are doing this summer and throughout this year is not merely about surviving the next five years. It is about laying a foundation for the next fifty.

Many of the structural changes we implement, and the cultural shifts we fight for today, will bear their greatest fruit long after we are gone. We are fighting to ensure that when our grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow up in the Diocese of Crookston, they will inherit a Church that is vibrantly alive, deeply faithful to the Eucharist, and passionately in love with Jesus Christ.

This generational vision requires selflessness. It asks us to look past our immediate comforts and preferences, and to sacrifice our time and energy for believers we will never meet this side of heaven. It is a profound act of love for the future of the Church.

**PRAYER**

*Lord of history, give us a generational vision. Help us to joyfully plant the seeds of renewal today, trusting that You will bring the harvest for our children and grandchildren. Amen.*

## Day 42 — July 4

### *True Freedom*

---

As our nation celebrates Independence Day, we reflect on the incredible gift of freedom. In our modern culture, freedom is often defined simply as the ability to do whatever we want, whenever we want, without restriction. But the Gospel offers a radically different, far more beautiful definition of freedom.

True Christian freedom is not the absence of boundaries; it is the freedom to choose the good. We are rescued from the slavery of sin so that we can freely bind ourselves to Christ and to one another in love. Fr. John Riccardo and the *ACTS XXIX* team emphasize that when we truly grasp the magnitude of the rescue mission Jesus accomplished on the Cross, our only logical response is to freely surrender our entire lives to Him.

As we plan for the future of our parishes, we exercise our freedom by choosing to serve. We freely choose to put the needs of the lost ahead of our own comfort. We freely offer our time, our talents, and our resources to build up the Kingdom of God. That is the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, thank You for the freedom You won for me on the Cross. I freely surrender my life to You today. Use me however You wish for the salvation of the world. Amen.*



## **Week 7: Building the Structure for Mission**

*July 5 – July 11, 2026*

## Day 43 — July 5

### *The Parish as a Family*

---

When we speak about restructuring our parishes, planning for the future, and creating “efficiencies,” it is vital to remember what a parish actually is. A parish is not a corporation, a country club, or a spiritual service station. It is a family. It is a living, breathing community of believers bound together by the blood of Christ.

If a parish is truly a family, it must act like one. In a healthy family, everyone has a role. No one expects the father or mother to do every single chore, cook every meal, and earn all the income while the children sit on the couch. Yet, for a long time, the “maintenance” culture of the Church inadvertently treated the laity like passive consumers of religious goods, while the priest did all the heavy lifting.

As we plan for a vibrant future in Dilworth and Hawley, we are being called to act like a mature spiritual family. This means stepping up, taking ownership of our parish’s spiritual health, and actively caring for one another. When the outside world looks at our communities, they should see a family so fiercely loving and supportive that they immediately want to be adopted into it.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, bind our parish together in authentic love. Help us to shed consumer mentalities and embrace our responsibilities as active, loving members of Your spiritual family. Amen.*

## Day 44 — July 6

### *The Courage to Let Go*

---

If you want to plant a new garden, you cannot simply throw seeds on top of overgrown weeds. You have to do the hard work of clearing the soil first. As our diocese looks toward a new season of evangelization, we are realizing that our parish schedules and volunteers are often stretched to the breaking point maintaining programs that were planted decades ago.

Not every program that was effective in 1990 is effective today. One of the most difficult tasks for our Local Parish Planning Teams is evaluating our current activities and asking: “Is this actually helping us make disciples, or are we just keeping it because we’ve always done it?”

Letting go of a beloved, long-standing parish tradition can cause real grief. But *Divine Renovation* reminds us that parish renewal requires making room for the new things the Holy Spirit wants to do. We must have the courage to gracefully retire programs that no longer serve the mission of evangelizing the lost, so that we can redirect our precious time and energy toward reaching our local community.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, give our parish the courage to evaluate everything we do through the lens of mission. Help us to gracefully let go of the past so we can embrace the future You have for us. Amen.*

## Day 45 — July 7

### *Identifying Your Charisms*

---

In his pastoral letter, Bishop Cozzens emphasizes that every baptized person has been given specific spiritual gifts, or “charisms,” by the Holy Spirit. These are not just natural talents; they are supernatural empowerments given to you specifically for the building up of the Church and the salvation of the world.

Have you ever stopped to ask the Holy Spirit what your charisms are? Perhaps you have a charism for hospitality, making anyone who walks through our church doors feel instantly known and loved. Perhaps you have a charism of teaching, or administration, or hidden intercessory prayer.

A mission-centered parish does not just desperately recruit volunteers to fill empty slots on a schedule; it actively helps its members discern their charisms and unleashes them to serve in their areas of giftedness. When you serve out of your unique spiritual gifts, you do not easily burn out; instead, you experience profound joy. Let us ask God to reveal our gifts this week.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, reveal to me the specific charisms You have placed in my heart. Give me the courage to offer them generously to my parish for the sake of Your Kingdom. Amen.*

## Day 46 — July 8

### *Financing the Mission*

---

Jesus spoke about money more than almost any other topic because He knew that our hearts follow our treasure. When we look at our parish budgets and our personal bank accounts, what story do they tell? Do they tell the story of a people obsessed with comfort and preservation, or a people passionately invested in a rescue mission?

Planning for mission means taking a hard look at our finances. If our ultimate goal is to bring the Gospel to those who do not know Christ, our budgets must reflect that priority. We have to resource our evangelization efforts, our outreach to the poor, and our youth ministries with bold generosity.

We are living in an apostolic age, and we cannot afford to be stingy with the resources God has given us. When parishioners understand that their financial contributions are not just paying the electric bill, but are actively saving souls and transforming lives, giving becomes a joyful act of worship. Let us pray for a spirit of radical generosity to sweep through our region.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, everything I have belongs to You. Give me a radically generous heart, and give our parish leaders the wisdom to invest our financial resources boldly in the work of evangelization. Amen.*

## Day 47 — July 9

### *Creating a Welcoming Culture*

---

If a family invites guests over for dinner, they don't leave the house messy, keep the front door locked, and ignore the guests when they finally find their way inside. Yet, sometimes our parishes inadvertently do exactly this to newcomers. We want to evangelize, but when people actually show up, they find our liturgies confusing, our communities closed-off, and our fellowship non-existent.

Transitioning to a mission-focused culture means prioritizing radical hospitality. Every single person who drives into our parking lot should be greeted with warmth. Our signage must be clear, our parishioners must be ready to help visitors navigate the Mass, and our coffee-and-donuts hour must be a place of genuine connection, not just a time to chat with the people we already know.

Evangelization is relational. People will rarely care about the theology of the Catholic Church until they first know that they are genuinely loved and welcomed by the people of the Catholic Church.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, make our parish a beacon of warmth and hospitality.*

*Give me eyes to see the newcomer, the lonely, and the stranger,  
and the courage to welcome them in Your name. Amen.*

## Day 48 — July 10

### *The Power of Invitation*

---

For many of us, the idea of “evangelizing” sounds terrifying. We picture ourselves standing on a street corner with a megaphone or arguing theology with skeptical coworkers. But in reality, evangelization usually begins with a simple, personal invitation.

Think about how Jesus called His first disciples. He didn’t give them a theological exam; He simply looked at them and said, “Come and see.” The most effective tool for growing our parish is not a new marketing campaign; it is you, looking at a friend, a neighbor, or a family member, and saying, “I’m going to a parish event this week, would you like to come with me?”

We often underestimate how many people in our lives are quietly searching for meaning, community, and God. They are simply waiting to be asked. Let us overcome our fear of rejection and make a habit of continually inviting others to “come and see” what the Lord is doing in our parish.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, give me the boldness to invite. Reveal to me the people in my life who are waiting for an invitation, and give me the words to simply say, "Come and see." Amen.*

## Day 49 — July 11

### *St. Benedict and the Missionary Option*

---

Today is the feast of St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism. In a time when the Roman Empire was collapsing and culture was plunging into chaos, St. Benedict established monasteries—places of deep prayer, order, and preserved Christian culture. From these strongholds, monks eventually went out and re-evangelized the entire continent of Europe.

There is a temptation today to simply “hunker down” as the culture around us becomes increasingly secular. We want our parishes to be safe fortresses where we can hide from the world. But St. Benedict’s monasteries were not meant to be permanent hiding places; they were training grounds for mission.

Bishop Cozzens is calling us to the “Missionary Option.” Our parishes must be places of intense spiritual formation and deep prayer, yes—but only so we have the strength to go out into the world. We gather at the altar to be nourished, and we are immediately dismissed to go in peace, glorifying the Lord by our lives out in the community.

**PRAYER**

*St. Benedict, pray for us. Help our parishes to be places of deep spiritual formation, so that we may be equipped to go out and joyfully evangelize the culture around us. Amen.*



## **Week 8: The Great Rescue Mission**

*July 12 – July 18, 2026*

## Day 50 — July 12

### *What is Evangelization?*

---

As we shift our focus to the third pillar of Bishop Cozzens' vision—Evangelize—we must first clearly understand what the word means. Evangelization is not about winning arguments. It is not about proving other people wrong. It is simply the joyful introduction of a Person.

Imagine you have a friend who is an incredible doctor, and you meet someone who is suffering from a terrible illness. You wouldn't just give the sick person a book about medicine; you would desperately want to introduce them to the doctor who could heal them. This is evangelization. We know the Divine Physician. We have experienced His healing, His mercy, and His love.

The world around us is deeply spiritually sick—plagued by anxiety, loneliness, and despair. Evangelization is simply looking at our hurting neighbors and saying, “I know Someone who can heal you, and His name is Jesus.” It is sharing the good news with the joy of someone who has just found the cure.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, You are the Divine Physician. Give me a joyful heart that cannot help but introduce others to Your healing love. Amen.*

## Day 51 — July 13

### *The Power of the Kerygma*

---

If you only had five minutes to explain the entire Catholic faith to someone who had never heard it, what would you say? We often get bogged down explaining complex moral teachings or historical Church practices, completely missing the absolute core of the message.

The early Church had a very specific, explosive message that they preached everywhere they went. It is called the *kerygma*, a Greek word that means “the core proclamation.” The *ACTS XXIX* ministry emphasizes that if we want to see new life in our parishes, we have to get back to preaching this core message with absolute clarity and conviction.

The *kerygma* can be summarized in four simple, world-changing realities: Created, Captured, Rescued, and Response. Over the next four days, we are going to walk through each of these stages. If we allow this message to truly sink into our own hearts, it will transform us from passive pew-sitters into passionate missionaries.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, plant the core message of the Gospel deeply in my heart. Let the truth of the kerygma be the foundation of everything I believe and everything I share with others. Amen.*

## Day 52 — July 14

### *Step One — Created out of Love*

---

The first movement of the Gospel is the beautiful truth of our creation. Why is there something rather than nothing? Why do you exist? The answer the world gives is that we are all just a random cosmic accident with no ultimate purpose. But the Gospel declares that you exist because a good, loving God intentionally desired you.

God, who is a perfect communion of love in the Trinity, did not need us. He created the universe out of sheer, overflowing goodness. He created humanity in His own image and likeness, designing us for union with Him and harmony with one another.

This means that your life has infinite value. It means that every single person you encounter today—the cashier, your difficult coworker, the person holding a sign on the street—was intentionally willed into existence by the Creator of the universe. When we start looking at our neighbors through this lens, our desire to invite them into the life of the Church changes from an obligation to a profound act of love.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of my life. Help me to see every person I meet today as Your beloved creation, designed for union with You. Amen.*

## Day 53 — July 15

### *Step Two — Captured by the Enemy*

---

If God created everything good, why is the world so messed up? Why is there war, disease, addiction, and death? Why do we so often hurt the people we love the most? This brings us to the second part of the Gospel message: the reality of Sin.

The *ACTS XXIX* ministry uses a very helpful word to describe our situation: we were *captured*. Through the deception of the enemy and the tragic misuse of our own free will, humanity rebelled against God. We severed the cord of life. We allowed sin and death to enter the world, and we became captives to powers we could not defeat on our own.

We must be honest about this. The world is fundamentally broken, and we are fundamentally broken. We cannot fix ourselves with more technology, better politics, or self-help books. We are hostages in enemy territory. Acknowledging this dark reality is crucial, because you cannot appreciate the magnitude of a rescue mission until you understand how desperate the captivity was.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I acknowledge the brokenness of the world and the sin in my own heart. I confess that I cannot save myself, and I am in desperate need of a Savior. Amen.*

## Day 54 — July 16

### *Step Three — Rescued by Jesus*

---

When humanity was hopelessly captured by sin and death, what did God do? He didn't just shout instructions from heaven. He didn't just send a rulebook. God Himself invaded enemy territory.

This is the explosive, life-changing heart of the Gospel: God became man in Jesus Christ. He lived among us, suffered with us, and willingly went to the Cross. On the Cross, Jesus wasn't just passively accepting a tragic fate; He was actively doing battle. He descended into the darkness, broke the chains of sin, and absolutely shattered the power of death through His glorious Resurrection.

Jesus is our rescuer. He fought the enemies we could not fight, and He won. The war is definitively decided. This is the truth that should make us want to shout from the rooftops. When we understand that Jesus literally laid down His life to pull us out of the wreckage, our faith ceases to be a boring set of rules and becomes a passionate love affair with the God who saved us.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, my Savior and my Rescuer, thank You for the Cross.*

*Thank You for invading the darkness to bring me into the light.*

*All praise and glory be to You forever! Amen.*

## Day 55 — July 17

### *Step Four — Our Response*

---

If a firefighter bursts into a burning building, scoops you up, and carries you to safety at the cost of his own severe burns, how do you respond? You don't just say a quick "thanks" and walk away. Your entire life is forever altered by that act of sacrifice. You live the rest of your days in profound gratitude.

This is the fourth and final step of the *kerygma*: our Response. Jesus has accomplished the rescue mission. He has defeated death and opened the gates of heaven. Now, He stands before each of us and invites us to respond.

Our response is to surrender our lives entirely to Him. It is to repent of our sins, be baptized into His Church, and allow Him to be the Lord of every aspect of our lives. Furthermore, our response is to join Him in the ongoing work of rescuing others. We are saved so that we can become the instruments of salvation for our neighbors. We are rescued to become rescuers.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, my only logical response to Your incredible sacrifice is the total surrender of my life. Take me, use me, and send me out to help rescue those who are still in darkness.  
Amen.*

## Day 56 — July 18

### *We Are the 29th Chapter*

---

The biblical Book of Acts contains 28 chapters that detail the jaw-dropping story of the early Church. It tells of ordinary men and women, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who took the *kerygma*—the message of the rescue mission—and spread it across the known world, turning the Roman Empire upside down.

But the story didn't end in the first century. The *ACTS XXIX* movement beautifully reminds us that we are currently living and writing the 29th chapter. The same Holy Spirit that empowered Peter and Paul is actively hovering over our parishes today.

As we engage in missional prayer for our region, we are not asking God to do something He hasn't done before. We are asking Him to continue the great story of salvation right here in northwest Minnesota. We are the actors on the stage in this present age. Let us step out of the shadows, confidently proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and write a bold, faithful chapter for the Diocese of Crookston.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, fill us with the fire of the early apostles. Give us the grace to write a bold and faithful 29th chapter in our own local communities today. Amen.*



## **Week 9: Going Out to the Margins**

*July 19 – July 25, 2026*

## Day 57 — July 19

### *The Field Hospital*

---

Pope Francis has famously described the Church not as a museum for saints, but as a “field hospital after battle.” This is a stunning and challenging image. A field hospital is messy. It is located near the front lines, not safely tucked away behind walls. Its primary purpose is to triage the wounded, stop the bleeding, and bind up broken bodies and souls.

If we want to build mission-centered parishes, we have to adopt the mentality of field medics. We must look at the culture around us—with all its addiction, broken families, and profound loneliness—not with judgment, but with the urgent compassion of a medic seeing a wounded soldier.

We must make sure that when the wounded stumble through the doors of St. Elizabeth or St. Andrew, they are met with the soothing balm of Christ’s mercy, not a checklist of demands. A mission-centered parish focuses intensely on healing, knowing that once a soul experiences the radical mercy of God, genuine conversion of life naturally follows.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, make our parish a true field hospital. Give me a heart of profound mercy for the broken, the lost, and the deeply wounded people in my community. Amen.*

## Day 58 — July 20

### *The Corporal Works of Mercy*

---

In the Gospels, Jesus makes it terrifyingly clear that our ultimate judgment will be based on how we treated the “least of these.” He closely identifies Himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, and the imprisoned.

Evangelization is not just about preaching words; it is about demonstrating the Gospel through concrete actions. The Corporal Works of Mercy—feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick—are the physical manifestation of God’s love. Deacon Mark Krejci challenged our diocese to imagine what would happen if every single Catholic intentionally performed one work of mercy each day. It would completely revolutionize our towns.

We cannot claim to love God if we ignore the physical suffering of our neighbors. As we plan for our parish’s future, our outreach to the poor cannot be an afterthought; it must be central to our identity. When the world sees Christians joyfully serving the marginalized without expecting anything in return, the message of the Gospel becomes irresistible.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, give me eyes to see You in the poor and the marginalized. Prompt me today to perform a concrete act of mercy for someone in physical need. Amen.*

## Day 59 — July 21

### *The Spiritual Works of Mercy*

---

While physical poverty is easy to spot, our modern world is suffering from a devastating, hidden epidemic of spiritual poverty. People are starving for truth, paralyzed by doubt, and drowning in loneliness.

Because of this, the Spiritual Works of Mercy are more vital today than ever. These include instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, bearing wrongs patiently, and forgiving offenses willingly. To be a missionary disciple means we are constantly looking for opportunities to bring spiritual nourishment to those around us.

Perhaps you have a coworker who is quietly agonizing over a difficult moral decision; you can gently counsel the doubtful. Perhaps someone has deeply hurt you; you can witness to the Gospel by forgiving them willingly. Evangelization happens in these quiet, everyday moments when we allow the Holy Spirit to use our words and our patience to bind up the spiritual wounds of our neighbors.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, make me an instrument of Your spiritual mercy today. Give me the right words to comfort the sorrowful, counsel the doubtful, and the grace to forgive those who have hurt me. Amen.*

## Day 60 — July 22

### *St. Mary Magdalene — Apostle to the Apostles*

---

Today the Church celebrates the feast of St. Mary Magdalene. Her story is the ultimate testament to the power of the rescue mission. She was a woman who was deeply afflicted, captured by seven demons, until she encountered Jesus. He completely healed and restored her, and in response, she became one of His most devoted followers.

Because she stayed at the foot of the Cross when almost everyone else fled, and because she went to the tomb on Easter morning, Jesus chose her to be the very first witness to His Resurrection. He gave her the mission to go and tell the hiding apostles that He was alive. For this reason, the Church calls her the “Apostle to the Apostles.”

Mary Magdalene reminds us that God does not call the perfect; He calls the rescued. Your past sins, your brokenness, and your messy history do not disqualify you from evangelizing. In fact, when God heals your brokenness, your story becomes the very testimony He uses to bring hope to others.

**PRAYER**

*St. Mary Magdalene, you experienced the profound rescuing love of Jesus. Pray for us, that we may have your courage to boldly proclaim the Resurrection to a world hiding in fear.  
Amen.*

## Day 61 — July 23

### *Accompanying the Broken*

---

When Jesus encountered people caught in sin, He always offered them a path to new life. But He never did it from a distance. He ate with tax collectors, He spoke gently with the woman at the well, and He allowed a woman of ill repute to wash His feet. He met them exactly where they were, in the midst of their mess.

This is the art of accompaniment. As we seek to evangelize our communities, we cannot expect people to clean up their lives *before* they come to the Church. We have to be willing to walk with them through the messiness of their current reality.

Accompaniment requires immense patience. It means listening without interrupting, loving without immediately judging, and consistently showing up for someone as the Holy Spirit slowly works on their heart. It is walking with them step-by-step toward the truth, just as Jesus so patiently walks with each of us.

#### **PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, teach me the patience of accompaniment. Help me to meet people exactly where they are, and to walk with them gently toward the fullness of Your truth. Amen.*

## Day 62 — July 24

### *Living as Missionaries of Hope*

---

If you watch the evening news or spend five minutes on social media, it is easy to become overwhelmed by negativity. Anger, division, and despair are the dominant currencies of our culture. In the face of this, Christians are called to be an absolute contradiction. We are called to be “missionaries of hope.”

Our hope is not based on political outcomes or economic forecasts. Our hope is anchored entirely in the historical fact of the empty tomb. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that suffering does not have the final say, and that light ultimately defeats darkness.

When you walk into your workplace, the grocery store, or a family gathering carrying this deep, unshakeable peace, people will notice. Hope is incredibly contagious. A parish that is infused with the joy of the Resurrection becomes a magnet for those who are exhausted by the world’s cynicism. Let us ask God to make us radiant witnesses of His joy.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, banish the cynicism from my heart. Fill me with the unshakeable joy of the Resurrection, so that I may be a true missionary of hope in my community. Amen.*

## Day 63 — July 25

### *Feast of St. James — The Pilgrim Church*

---

Today we celebrate the feast of St. James the Apostle. Tradition holds that after Pentecost, James traveled to the ends of the known world—all the way to Spain—to preach the Gospel. For centuries, millions of Christians have walked the *Camino de Santiago* (The Way of St. James), a great pilgrimage route leading to his tomb.

Pilgrimage is a powerful metaphor for the Christian life. A pilgrim travels light, knowing that this world is not their final home. They keep their eyes fixed on the destination. As a diocese, Bishop Cozzens is asking us to become a pilgrim Church. We must detach ourselves from the heavy baggage of “how we’ve always done things” so that we can be agile and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s leading.

We are on a journey together toward the Kingdom of Heaven, and our mission is to bring as many people with us as possible. As we conclude this week, let us embrace the adventure of the pilgrim life, ready to walk wherever the Lord leads our parishes in the years to come.

**PRAYER**

*St. James, you traveled to the ends of the earth for the sake of the Gospel. Pray for our diocese, that we may travel light and follow the Lord's leading with joyful, pilgrim hearts. Amen.*



## **Week 10: The Everyday Missionary**

*July 26 – August 1, 2026*

## Day 64 — July 26

### *Saints Joachim and Anne — The Domestic Church*

---

Today we celebrate the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the grandparents of Jesus. Their feast day is a beautiful reminder that the most fundamental and vital center of evangelization is not the parish building; it is the family home.

In the *New Life* pastoral vision, Bishop Cozzens points out that the family is the “domestic Church.” It is the first place where the Gospel is preached, not usually with grand speeches, but with the quiet, daily witness of love, forgiveness, and shared prayer. If we want to renew the Diocese of Crookston, that renewal must take root around our kitchen tables and in our living rooms.

When a family consciously decides to place Jesus Christ at the center of their home, it creates a powerful ripple effect. As parents and grandparents, our greatest missionary task is to pass on a vibrant, living faith to the next generation. We do this by praying with our children, speaking openly about what God is doing in our lives, and demonstrating that our Catholic faith is the joyful anchor of our family.

**PRAYER**

*Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for our families. Help our homes to become true domestic churches where the love of Jesus is taught, lived, and joyfully shared across generations. Amen.*

## Day 65 — July 27

### *The Myth of the ‘Professional’ Catholic*

---

When we hear the word “evangelization,” a common fear immediately rises in our hearts: *I don’t know enough. I’m not a theologian. What if they ask me a question I can’t answer?* We have bought into the myth that sharing the Gospel is a job reserved exclusively for priests, deacons, or those with degrees in theology.

But the history of the Church tells a completely different story. The *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that the early Church grew explosively not because of professional apologists, but because ordinary tradesmen, mothers, and soldiers simply could not stop talking about the rescue mission of Jesus Christ. They were not experts; they were witnesses.

You do not need a theology degree to tell someone how Jesus has changed your life. You only need authenticity. If a coworker or a friend asks you a difficult question about Church teaching and you don’t know the answer, the most powerful and honest thing you can say is, “I don’t know, but let’s find out together.” Do not let the fear of not knowing everything stop you from sharing the One you do know.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, free me from the pressure of needing to have all the answers. Give me the simple, joyful courage to be an authentic witness to Your love in my everyday life. Amen.*

## Day 66 — July 28

### *The First Gospel People Read*

---

There is a profound saying often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary, use words.” While we certainly must use our words to share the message of Jesus, this quote highlights a crucial truth: the very first Gospel your neighbors will ever read is the way you live your life.

Before anyone will listen to our explanation of the *kerygma*, they will observe our character. How do we treat the waitress at the local diner? How do we handle frustration in the grocery store checkout line? Do we speak about others with grace, or do we join in the gossip at the office?

A mission-centered parish is made up of individuals who consciously strive to let the light of Christ shine through their ordinary actions. When our lives are marked by supernatural patience, deep joy, and radical generosity, people are naturally drawn to us. They begin to wonder what makes us different. Our actions plow the soil, making it ready to receive the seeds of the Gospel words we will eventually plant.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, let my life be a reflection of Your goodness. May my daily actions, my patience, and my joy be the first invitation my neighbors receive to know Your love. Amen.*

## Day 67 — July 29

### *St. Martha and the Gift of Hospitality*

---

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Martha, who famously welcomed Jesus into her home in Bethany. While she is often remembered for being anxious about the serving details, her core desire was beautiful: she wanted to provide a hospitable, welcoming place for the Lord to rest.

Hospitality is an incredibly powerful tool for evangelization. In our increasingly isolated and digitally fractured world, people are starving for genuine human connection. The simple act of inviting a neighbor over for a meal, hosting a coffee morning, or welcoming a new family at St. Elizabeth or St. Andrew can be a life-changing event.

The *Divine Renovation* network teaches that the path back to the Church often begins at a dining room table. When we open our homes and our lives to others, sharing food and laughter, walls begin to come down. We earn the right to be heard. True hospitality says to the stranger, “You have a place here, and you are loved.”

**PRAYER**

*St. Martha, pray for us, that we may have the grace of warm hospitality. Help us to open our homes and our hearts to those who are lonely and searching for community. Amen.*

## Day 68 — July 30

### *The Ministry of Listening*

---

We often think of evangelization as talking—delivering a message, sharing a testimony, or explaining a doctrine. But one of the most essential skills for a missionary disciple is actually the art of listening.

To bring the healing message of the Gospel to someone, we must first understand where they are hurting. This requires us to ask good questions and then quietly, attentively listen to their answers without immediately jumping in to fix their problems or correct their theology. When people feel truly heard, they feel loved.

When we engage in missional prayer for our friends in Dilworth and Hawley, we are asking the Holy Spirit to open doors for conversation. When those doors open, our first job is to listen. We listen for their fears, their hopes, and their brokenness. Only when we have truly listened can we gently offer the specific, healing truth of Jesus Christ that their heart is crying out for.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, make me a better listener. Give me the patience to truly hear the hearts of those around me, so that I may respond with Your wisdom and compassion. Amen.*

## Day 69 — July 31

### *St. Ignatius and Finding God in All Things*

---

On this feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, we are reminded of his profound spiritual principle: “Find God in all things.” God is not confined to the hour we spend at Mass on Sunday morning. He is actively present and working in our offices, our schools, our farm fields, and our neighborhoods.

To be an everyday missionary means living with a heightened spiritual awareness. It means recognizing that the mundane moments of our week are actually divine appointments. The conversation with a struggling coworker by the water cooler, the interaction with the tired cashier, the neighbor asking for help with a project—these are not interruptions to our day; they are the mission field.

As we plan for the future of our diocese, our goal is to equip every parishioner to view their secular workplace or their neighborhood as their specific God-given territory. You are placed exactly where you are so that you can bring the light of Christ into that specific corner of the world.

**PRAYER**

*St. Ignatius, pray for us, that we may have eyes to see God working in all things. Help me to recognize the divine appointments hidden in the ordinary moments of my day. Amen.*

## Day 70 — August 1

### *The Ripple Effect*

---

When you drop a single pebble into a pond, the ripples expand outward, eventually touching every edge of the water.

Evangelization works in the exact same way. We often become overwhelmed thinking we have to save the whole world, or even our whole town, all by ourselves.

But Jesus started with just twelve men. He poured His life into them, equipped them, and sent them out. They, in turn, poured their lives into others. The *Planning for Mission* process asks us to simply focus on our own “pebble.”

If you intentionally invest in sharing your faith with just one or two people this year—inviting them, listening to them, and bringing them to Jesus—and they eventually do the same for someone else, the multiplication is staggering. We do not need to launch massive, complicated programs to change our region. We just need everyday believers willing to create a ripple of grace in the lives of the people immediately around them.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I cannot save the whole world, but I can love the person right in front of me. Use my small acts of faith to create a ripple of Your grace that reaches the edges of our community. Amen.*



## **Week 11: Overcoming the Fear**

*August 2 – August 8, 2026*

## Day 71 — August 2

### *Do Not Be Afraid*

---

It is a fascinating and deeply comforting fact that the most frequently repeated command in all of Sacred Scripture is, “Do not be afraid.” God repeats it constantly because He knows our human nature. He knows that when He calls us to step out of our comfort zones, our immediate reaction is almost always fear.

When Bishop Cozzens invites us to move our parishes from maintenance to mission, fear is the natural first response. We fear change. We fear that if we invite someone to church, they might reject us. We fear that we aren’t holy enough to be used by God.

But courage is not the absence of fear; it is the decision to move forward in faith despite the fear. The Holy Spirit does not remove our trembling, but He gives us the strength to speak the truth anyway. Let us claim the promise of Scripture today. The Lord of the universe walks beside us, and because of that, we have absolutely nothing to fear.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, when I am paralyzed by the fear of rejection or the fear of failure, remind me of Your constant presence. Give me the bold courage to act in faith. Amen.*

## Day 72 — August 3

### *The Measure of Success*

---

One of the greatest obstacles to sharing our faith is the fear of failure. What if I share my testimony with my brother, and he still refuses to come back to the Church? What if our parish launches an evangelization initiative, and only three people show up?

We have to drastically redefine what “success” looks like in the Kingdom of God. St. Teresa of Calcutta famously said, “God has not called me to be successful; He has called me to be faithful.” Our job is to lovingly, joyfully, and clearly invite people to know Jesus Christ. What they do with that invitation is entirely between them and God.

We cannot control the soil; we are only responsible for throwing the seed. When we surrender our attachment to the results, the heavy burden of evangelization is lifted. We are freed to simply love people and share the Gospel, trusting that the Holy Spirit is the one who ultimately changes hearts in His own perfect timing.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, I surrender my desire for measurable success. Help me to be radically faithful in sharing Your love, and leave the results entirely in Your capable hands. Amen.*

## Day 73 — August 4

### *St. John Vianney — The Power of Presence*

---

Today is the feast of St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests. When he was assigned to the small, spiritually dead town of Ars, France, the people were entirely indifferent to the faith. He didn't arrive with a glossy strategic plan or a massive budget. He arrived with an intense love for Jesus and a willingness to suffer for his flock.

He spent hours upon hours in the freezing church praying for the conversion of his parishioners. He made himself available in the confessional day and night. Slowly, his profound, humble presence broke through the apathy of the town. Within a few years, Ars was completely transformed, and thousands of pilgrims flocked there to experience God's mercy.

As we plan for the renewal of our diocese, St. John Vianney reminds us that structural changes must be animated by deep, personal holiness. A parish is not renewed by programs; it is renewed by saints. Let us pray fervently for our own pastors today, and let us commit to supporting them with our own pursuit of radical holiness.

**PRAYER**

*St. John Vianney, pray for all the priests in the Diocese of Crookston. Grant them your zeal for souls, your humble endurance, and your profound love for the Eucharist. Amen.*

## Day 74 — August 5

### *Instruments of the Spirit*

---

When God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites, Moses panicked. He gave a list of excuses, specifically pointing out that he was not a good speaker. God's response was simple: "I will be in your mouth and teach you what you are to speak."

We often make the same excuses as Moses. We feel inadequate to the task of evangelizing the culture around us. But the *Divine Renovation* model is anchored on the truth that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization. We are merely the instruments.

A paintbrush cannot paint a masterpiece on its own, but in the hands of a master artist, it can create something breathtaking. When we make ourselves available to God through missional prayer, we are placing ourselves in the hands of the Divine Artist. We don't need to be perfectly eloquent; we just need to be willing instruments, trusting that the Holy Spirit will supply the words and the grace when the moment arrives.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I offer myself to You as a willing instrument. I trust that when You call me to speak Your truth to someone, Your Spirit will give me the exact words they need to hear. Amen.*

## Day 75 — August 6

### *The Transfiguration — Glimpsing the Glory*

---

On today's feast of the Transfiguration, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and reveals His blinding, divine glory to them. He does this right before He begins His journey toward the suffering and death of the Cross. He gave them a glimpse of the glorious reality to sustain them through the intense darkness that was coming.

Parish renewal and evangelization are not easy paths. There will be seasons of frustration, fatigue, and apparent lack of fruit. In those difficult “valley” moments of our diocesan planning, we must hold tightly to our own “mountain top” experiences—the times we have profoundly encountered the love and glory of Jesus in our own lives.

The vision Bishop Cozzens has cast is a vision of transfiguration for our diocese. It is the belief that our tired, struggling parishes can be radically transformed by the light of Christ. Let us ask the Lord for glimpses of His glory to sustain our hope as we do the hard work of building for the future.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, reveal Your glory to us. When the work of renewal feels heavy or discouraging, remind our hearts of the radiant victory You have already won. Amen.*

## Day 76 — August 7

### *The Power of Vulnerability*

---

There is a temptation in Christian life to project an image of perfection. We want people to think we have it all together, that our marriages are flawless, and that we never struggle with doubt. But a shiny, flawless exterior is actually terrible for evangelization. It makes people feel like they could never measure up to the demands of the Church.

The *ACTS XXIX* ministry teaches that we connect with others not through our perfection, but through our shared brokenness. When you are willing to be vulnerable—when you admit that you struggle with anxiety, or that your family has gone through dark times, but that Jesus has been your anchor through it all—you become incredibly relatable.

Your scars are proof of your healing. Do not hide the struggles you have endured. When you share how the Lord's rescue mission has met you in your deepest weakness, it gives others the courage to believe that God can rescue them from their darkness, too.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, give me the courage to be vulnerable. Help me to use the story of my own struggles and Your healing grace to bring hope to those who are hurting. Amen.*

## Day 77 — August 8

*St. Dominic — Preaching with Joy*

---

St. Dominic, whose feast we celebrate today, founded the Order of Preachers (the Dominicans) to combat the darkness and confusion of his time. His secret weapon was not anger or condemnation; it was his profound, radiant joy. It was said that Dominic always walked with a smile and spoke to everyone with deep affection.

We cannot evangelize the modern world with a scowl on our faces. If our message is that Jesus Christ has defeated death and opened the gates of eternal paradise, our faces should reflect that reality! A joyless Catholic is a contradiction in terms, and a joyless parish will never attract the lost.

Joy is not the same as a shallow, forced happiness. True Christian joy is the deep, unshakeable confidence that we are fiercely loved by God, regardless of our circumstances. As we invite others to experience the *New Life* of our parishes, let us ensure that our invitation is always accompanied by the attractive, irresistible joy of St. Dominic.

**PRAYER**

*St. Dominic, pray that our parish may be filled with your radiant joy. May our lives be such a joyful witness that others cannot help but ask us about the source of our hope. Amen.*



## **Week 12: Nourished for the Journey**

*August 9 – August 15, 2026*

## Day 78 — August 9

### *We Cannot Give What We Do Not Have*

---

As we spend our summer reflecting on how to plan, restructure, and step out in evangelization, we must pause to remember a fundamental spiritual law: *Nemo dat quod non habet*—you cannot give what you do not have.

If we attempt to pour out the love of Christ to our neighbors in Dilworth and Hawley, but our own spiritual reservoirs are empty, we will quickly succumb to burnout and resentment. The call to be a missionary disciple requires a relentless commitment to our own interior life. This is why Bishop Cozzens' vision begins with the word "Revive."

Before you go out to speak to the world, you must first sit in silence with the Lord. We must be consistently nourished by daily prayer, the reading of Scripture, and the frequent reception of the Sacraments. Only a heart that is overflowing with the grace of God can effectively quench the spiritual thirst of the world.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, keep me tethered to You. Remind me daily that my ability to love and serve others flows entirely from the time I spend resting in Your presence. Amen.*

## Day 79 — August 10

### *St. Lawrence — The True Treasure*

---

During the persecution of the early Church, the Roman authorities demanded that the deacon St. Lawrence hand over the “treasures of the Church.” Lawrence asked for three days to gather them. He then presented to the prefect a vast crowd of the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the suffering, declaring, “Here are the treasures of the Church!”

St. Lawrence understood the heart of the Gospel perfectly. As our diocese looks at our financial resources and our parish buildings, we must never forget that our truest treasure is the people we are called to serve.

A mission-centered parish places the highest value on the marginalized. When we plan our budgets and our ministries, we must ask ourselves if we are treating the poor and the broken as our greatest treasure. Because when we serve them, we are directly serving and encountering Jesus Christ Himself.

**PRAYER**

*St. Lawrence, pray for us, that we may see the poor, the lonely, and the marginalized as the true treasure of our parish, and serve them with the love of Christ. Amen.*

## Day 80 — August 11

### *St. Clare — The Power of the Hidden Life*

---

St. Clare of Assisi lived her entire adult life enclosed in a humble monastery. She never traveled the world preaching, she never wrote theological treatises, and she never organized massive evangelization programs. Yet, she is one of the most powerful spiritual forces in the history of the Church. Her secret was the hidden power of intercessory prayer and Eucharistic adoration.

Not everyone in our parish is called to be a public speaker, a small group leader, or a frontline evangelist. But every single person is called to the vital work of missional prayer. Those who are homebound, those who spend quiet hours in the adoration chapel, and those who offer up their daily sufferings are the hidden powerhouse of the parish.

Without the spiritual covering of these hidden intercessors, all our outward planning and pastoral programs will fail. The *Divine Renovation* of our diocese relies absolutely on the quiet, fervent prayers of the faithful, pleading with God to pour out His Spirit upon our region.

**PRAYER**

*St. Clare, teach us the immense value of hidden, intercessory prayer. May those in our parish who pray in secret be the spiritual engine that drives our mission forward. Amen.*

## Day 81 — August 12

### *Ite, Missa Est*

---

For centuries, the priest concluded the Latin Mass with the phrase, “Ite, missa est.” While often translated simply as “The Mass is ended, go in peace,” the literal translation is much more profound: “Go, she is sent.” The word *Mass* itself comes from this dismissal.

The end of the liturgy is not a conclusion; it is a commissioning. We have gathered to listen to the Word of God, we have offered our sacrifices, and we have been physically united with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. We are now sent out into the world as living tabernacles, carrying the presence of God into our homes and workplaces.

When you walk out the doors of St. Elizabeth or St. Andrew this Sunday, you are officially on duty. The priest has sent you forth to be the hands and feet of Christ. The Mass is the spiritual fuel station, but the true work of the Church happens in the world between Monday and Saturday.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, as I leave Mass each week, let the words of dismissal ring in my heart as a bold commissioning. Send me out as a joyful carrier of Your presence to the world. Amen.*

## Day 82 — August 13

### *Enduring the Dry Seasons*

---

Anyone who has ever tried to grow a garden in Minnesota knows that you cannot control the weather. You can plant the seed perfectly, water it, and tend the soil, but sometimes a dry season comes, and the growth is painfully slow.

The spiritual life, and the work of parish renewal, follow this same agricultural rhythm. There will be seasons where our evangelization efforts seem to be bearing no fruit, and the *Planning for Mission* process feels tedious. During these dry seasons, the temptation to quit or return to our old “maintenance” habits is incredibly strong.

But the *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that God is always working underground, even when we cannot see the shoots breaking the surface. Faithfulness means continuing to tend the soil, continuing to pray for the lost, and continuing to love our neighbors, trusting completely that God will provide the rain and the harvest in His perfect time.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, give me the grace of endurance. When the work of renewal feels dry and fruitless, help me to remain faithful to the mission You have entrusted to me. Amen.*

## Day 83 — August 14

*St. Maximilian Kolbe — The Cost of Love*

---

St. Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish priest imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp. When a prisoner escaped, the guards selected ten men to be starved to death in a bunker. When one of the condemned men cried out for his wife and children, Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take his place. Kolbe died in that dark bunker, singing hymns of praise.

His ultimate sacrifice is a stark reminder of what true love looks like. Jesus said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Evangelization is not a neat, tidy hobby. Entering into the messiness of other people’s lives to bring them the Gospel requires sacrifice.

It requires the sacrifice of our time, our comfort, and our pride. To truly seek the lost means we must be willing to suffer with them and for them, just as Jesus suffered for us. The renewal of our diocese will be built upon the quiet, daily sacrifices of believers who love their neighbors more than their own comfort.

**PRAYER**

*St. Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us, that we may have the courage to lay down our lives for others. Give us a love so deep that it willingly embraces sacrifice for the salvation of souls.  
Amen.*

## Day 84 — August 15

### *The Assumption — Our Ultimate Hope*

---

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. At the end of her earthly life, Mary was taken up, body and soul, into the glory of God. This feast is a massive beacon of hope for every Christian. Where Mary has gone, we are promised to follow.

All of the hard work we are discussing this summer—the planning, the restructuring, the evangelizing, the praying—is entirely focused on this one ultimate destination. We want every single person in the Diocese of Crookston to experience the eternal joy of Heaven. We are fighting to empty Hell and populate Paradise.

When the daily struggles of life weigh us down, or when the challenges facing the Church seem insurmountable, we must lift our eyes to the Assumption. The victory is already won. Our Mother is waiting for us. Let us work tirelessly, with joyful urgency, to bring as many of our brothers and sisters home with us as possible.

**PRAYER**

*Mary, Assumed into Heaven, draw our eyes upward. When we grow weary in the work of mission, remind us of the glorious, eternal home that awaits all who follow your Son. Amen.*



## **Week 13: The Cost and Joy of Discipleship**

*August 16 – August 22, 2026*

## Day 85 — August 16

### *Counting the Cost*

---

When Jesus invited people to follow Him, He was remarkably honest about the reality of the journey. He never promised that it would be easy, comfortable, or universally applauded. In fact, He explicitly told His followers that if they wanted to be His disciples, they had to pick up their crosses.

Transitioning our parishes from a culture of maintenance to a culture of mission comes with a cost. It costs us our comfort zones. It requires the sacrifice of our time to accompany someone who is struggling, and the sacrifice of our pride to risk being rejected when we invite a neighbor to church. We must be honest about this: true renewal is hard work.

But the *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us that we willingly pay this cost because of the magnitude of the rescue mission. When you realize that Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price to pull you out of the grip of sin and death, giving up your Sunday afternoon comfort to serve the parish or the poor suddenly feels like a profound privilege, not a burden.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, give me the courage to count the cost of discipleship and joyfully pay it. Strip away my love of comfort, and replace it with a burning love for Your mission. Amen.*

## Day 86 — August 17

### *The Joy of the Harvest*

---

While discipleship requires sacrifice, the ultimate hallmark of a missionary is joy. When we do the hard work of plowing the soil, planting the seeds of the Gospel, and patiently tending to the spiritual needs of our neighbors, we eventually get to participate in the harvest.

There is no greater joy in the human experience than witnessing a soul come alive in Christ. When a parishioner who has been away from the sacraments for decades finally walks into the confessional, or when a neighbor you have been praying for suddenly asks to come to Mass with you, the rejoicing is profound.

This is the “New Life” Bishop Cozzens is pointing us toward. We are enduring the growing pains of parish planning and restructuring today so that our region can experience the breathtaking joy of a spiritual harvest tomorrow. The sacrifices we make now are the seeds of our future rejoicing.

**PRAYER**

*Lord of the Harvest, fix my eyes on the joy that is to come. Let the hope of seeing souls transformed sustain me through the hard work of parish renewal. Amen.*

## Day 87 — August 18

### *Reclaiming the Lord's Day*

---

In our hyper-connected, relentlessly busy modern culture, Sundays have often become just another day to catch up on errands, youth sports, and chores. But from the very beginning of the Church, Sunday was entirely different. It was the Lord's Day—a day set apart for worship, rest, and family.

If we want to build mission-centered parishes, we have to boldly reclaim Sunday. The *Divine Renovation* model stresses the importance of an outstanding Sunday experience. But that experience doesn't end when we leave the parking lot at St. Elizabeth or St. Andrew. How we spend the rest of our Sunday is a profound witness to the world.

When we intentionally protect our Sundays for family meals, genuine rest, and acts of charity rather than frantic productivity, we offer a beautiful contradiction to an exhausted culture. We show the world that we answer to a different rhythm—the rhythm of grace.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, teach me how to truly rest. Help my family to reclaim the Lord's Day as a joyful oasis of peace, worship, and connection in a busy world. Amen.*

## Day 88 — August 19

### *The Strength of the Pack*

---

In the wild, a lone wolf is incredibly vulnerable, but a wolf pack is a formidable force. The Christian life was designed with this exact same principle. God never intended for you to fight the spiritual battles of this apostolic age alone.

As we engage in the work of evangelization, we must prioritize authentic Christian community. This means moving beyond polite, superficial conversations at coffee-and-donuts, and forming deep, intentional friendships with other believers. We need brothers and sisters who will hold us accountable, pray for us when we are weak, and celebrate with us when we see God move.

Parish renewal depends on these micro-communities. Small groups, men's and women's fraternities, and prayer teams are the connective tissue of a healthy church. When a parish is closely knit together in love, it becomes a strong, resilient net capable of catching the massive harvest of souls God wants to bring in.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, bind our parish together. Lead me to deep, authentic friendships with other believers so that we may encourage one another in the work of the Gospel. Amen.*

## Day 89 — August 20

*St. Bernard of Clairvaux — Passion for the Word*

---

Today is the feast of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a great abbot and doctor of the Church who was known for his honey-sweet preaching and his absolute immersion in Sacred Scripture. His words were so powerful because his mind was completely saturated with the Word of God.

If we are going to be effective everyday missionaries, we must follow St. Bernard's example. We cannot speak God's truth to our neighbors if we do not know God's truth ourselves. The *New Life* pastoral vision calls for a profound renewal of adult catechesis and Bible study.

We must fall in love with the Scriptures. Reading the Bible is not about fulfilling a daily reading quota; it is about learning the sound of the Shepherd's voice. When our minds are saturated with the Word of God, our everyday conversations will naturally begin to overflow with His wisdom, comfort, and truth.

**PRAYER**

*St. Bernard, pray that a hunger for Sacred Scripture would awaken in my heart. Let the Word of God transform my mind, so that my words might bring life to others. Amen.*

## Day 90 — August 21

*Pope St. Pius X — Restoring All Things in Christ*

---

On the feast of Pope St. Pius X, we remember his papal motto: “To restore all things in Christ.” He famously lowered the age for receiving First Holy Communion, passionately believing that children needed the strength of the Eucharist as early as possible to navigate the modern world.

His motto perfectly captures the goal of our diocesan planning. We are not just trying to restore our parish bank accounts or restore our Mass attendance numbers. We are trying to restore *all things*—our families, our local schools, our civic life, our culture—under the gentle, healing lordship of Jesus Christ.

This requires us to view every aspect of our lives through the lens of faith. Our politics, our entertainment, and our finances must all be brought into submission to Christ. When a parish community commits to restoring all things in Christ, the light they generate cannot be hidden.

**PRAYER**

*Pope St. Pius X, pray for our diocese. Give us the courage to submit every area of our lives, our families, and our culture to the loving lordship of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Day 91 — August 22

### *The Queenship of Mary*

---

Today we celebrate the Queenship of Mary. In the ancient Davidic kingdom, the queen was not the king's wife, but the king's mother (the *Gebirah*). Her primary role was to be the greatest intercessor for the people, bringing their petitions directly to the throne of her son.

As we conclude this week, we entrust the entire *Planning for Mission* process to our Queen Mother. Bishop Cozzens has consistently placed the Diocese of Crookston under Mary's protection, specifically under her title as Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Star of the New Evangelization.

When the task of parish renewal feels heavy, we must run to Mary. She is the mother of the rescue mission. She wants nothing more than to see her Son known and loved by every person in our region. Let us ask her to advocate for us, to protect our parishes from division, and to crush the head of the enemy's discouragement under her heel.

**PRAYER**

*Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, we entrust our parish to your maternal care. Intercede for us, protect us, and lead us always closer to the Sacred Heart of your Son. Amen.*



## **Week 14: The Long Game**

*August 23 – August 29, 2026*

## Day 92 — August 23

### *Planting Shade Trees*

---

There is a beautiful humility in realizing that the work we are doing in our parishes today may not reach its full bloom in our own lifetimes. Moving a diocese from maintenance to mission is not a quick-fix program; it is a generational shift.

We are planting shade trees for our children and grandchildren. The difficult decisions our Local Parish Planning Teams are making regarding restructuring and collaboration are designed to ensure that the Catholic Church in northwest Minnesota is vibrant and healthy fifty years from now.

This requires us to overcome our natural desire for immediate results. The *ACTS XXIX* movement encourages us to take the “long view” of history. God is entirely in control of the timeline. Our only responsibility is to be faithful to the work He has assigned us today, trusting that He will faithfully water the seeds we plant for the generations yet to come.

**PRAYER**

*Lord of history, free me from the demand for immediate results.  
Give me the humility and patience to joyfully plant seeds of  
faith that will shade the generations to come. Amen.*

## Day 93 — August 24

*Feast of St. Bartholomew — Faithful in the Hidden Things*

---

Today we celebrate the Apostle St. Bartholomew (also known as Nathanael). We know very little about his specific actions in the Book of Acts. He didn't write any epistles, and he isn't recorded preaching massive sermons like Peter. Yet, he was a foundational pillar of the Church, faithfully carrying the Gospel to the corners of the earth, eventually being martyred for his quiet, steadfast witness.

Most of the work of parish renewal is incredibly unglamorous. It is the hidden work of setting up chairs in the parish hall, reviewing budget spreadsheets, quietly praying in the back pew, or patiently listening to a grieving neighbor.

God sees the hidden things. He honors the faithful, quiet, persistent work of His people just as much as He honors the grand, public gestures. If you feel like your contributions to the parish are small or unnoticed, look to St. Bartholomew. Your hidden faithfulness is the very bedrock upon which the Church is built.

**PRAYER**

*St. Bartholomew, pray for us. Teach us to be radically faithful in the small, hidden tasks of parish life, knowing that God sees and blesses all that is done in love. Amen.*

## Day 94 — August 25

### *A Posture of Curiosity*

---

When we encounter people who have walked away from the faith, or who hold views completely opposed to the Gospel, our natural reaction is often defensive. We want to argue, to correct, or to retreat to the safety of our own echo chambers.

But effective evangelization requires a different posture: the posture of genuine curiosity. Instead of immediately launching into a debate, what if we started asking questions? “What was your experience with the Church growing up?” “What is your biggest obstacle to believing in God?” “What brings you the most joy in life?”

When we ask questions with genuine, loving curiosity, we disarm the tension. We show the person that we view them as a beloved child of God, not just a theological project to be fixed. By understanding their specific wounds and objections, we can better introduce them to the specific healing that Jesus offers.

#### **PRAYER**

*Jesus, replace my defensiveness with loving curiosity. Teach me to ask good questions, to listen deeply, and to honor the dignity of everyone I meet today. Amen.*

## Day 95 — August 26

### *The Patience of the Spirit*

---

The Holy Spirit is a gentleman; He never forces His way in. He respects the free will God has given us. Because of this, the process of conversion—whether it is the conversion of an individual heart or the cultural conversion of an entire parish—is often profoundly slow.

As we advocate for a more missional focus at St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew, we must exercise the patience of the Spirit. Not everyone in the parish will immediately understand or embrace the *New Life* vision. Some will be fearful of change; others will be deeply attached to the way things have always been.

We must not respond with frustration or impatience. We must accompany our own fellow parishioners with the same gentleness we offer to the unchurched. We cast the vision, we invite, we pray, and then we patiently wait for the Holy Spirit to soften hearts and illuminate minds at His own perfect pace.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, grant me Your supernatural patience. Help me to gently accompany my fellow parishioners through the challenges of change, always acting in charity and grace.  
Amen.*

## Day 96 — August 27

### *St. Monica — The Patroness of Persistence*

---

Today is the feast of St. Monica, one of the greatest intercessors in Church history. For decades, she watched her brilliant son, Augustine, live a life of hedonism and reject the Christian faith. She shed countless tears and prayed relentlessly for his soul, refusing to give up even when his conversion seemed entirely impossible.

God honored her persistence. Augustine not only converted, but he became one of the greatest theologians and saints the Church has ever known.

Many of us have our own “Augustines”—children, spouses, or siblings who have wandered far from the Lord. It is easy to become exhausted and tempted to stop praying. Today, let St. Monica infuse you with renewed strength. Do not stop praying for them. Do not stop offering your sacrifices for them. The rescue mission is real, and no soul is too far gone for the grace of Jesus Christ.

#### **PRAYER**

*St. Monica, you never gave up on your son. Intercede for my loved ones who are away from the Church. Give me your relentless, tearful persistence in prayer. Amen.*

## Day 97 — August 28

*St. Augustine — Our Restless Hearts*

---

Following his mother's feast day, today we celebrate St. Augustine himself. After decades of searching for happiness in pleasure, philosophy, and prestige, he finally surrendered to the Gospel. He famously wrote, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

This is the fundamental truth we must remember as we look at the culture around us. Our neighbors in Dilworth, Hawley, and beyond are trying desperately to cure their restlessness. They are seeking peace in wealth, success, distractions, and relationships. But the human heart was designed with an infinite void that can only be filled by the infinite God.

Evangelization is simply pointing restless hearts toward the only true source of rest. When we share the Gospel, we are not trying to impose a burden on people; we are offering them the very thing their souls are frantically searching for. We are offering them the profound, unshakeable peace of Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER**

*St. Augustine, pray that I may recognize the restlessness in the culture around me. Give me the courage to point my neighbors toward the ultimate rest found only in Christ. Amen.*

## Day 98 — August 29

### *The Martyrdom of John the Baptist*

---

Today we commemorate the passion and martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. He spoke the truth boldly to King Herod, calling him to repentance, and it cost him his head. He is a stark reminder that proclaiming the truth of God's design will inevitably bring us into conflict with the world.

To be a mission-centered Church in the 21st century means we must be willing to be a sign of contradiction. The *ACTS XXIX* movement challenges us to unapologetically preach the truth about the dignity of the human person, the sanctity of marriage, and the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, even when those truths are deeply unpopular.

We do not speak the truth to be combative; we speak it because truth is the only thing that actually sets captives free. Like John the Baptist, we must be willing to decrease so that Christ may increase, boldly pointing the way to the Lamb of God regardless of the cost.

#### **PRAYER**

*St. John the Baptist, obtain for me a spirit of uncompromising courage. Help our parish to speak the truth in love, no matter the opposition we may face from the world. Amen.*



## **Week 15: Laboring for the Harvest**

*August 30 – September 5, 2026*

## Day 99 — August 30

### *The Vineyard of the Lord*

---

In the Gospels, Jesus often compares the Kingdom of God to a vineyard. He is the master of the estate, and He is constantly going out to the marketplace to hire laborers to work in His fields. He invites some at the dawn of their lives, and some at the eleventh hour, but the call is the same for everyone: “Go and work in my vineyard.”

The Diocese of Crookston is our specific corner of the Lord’s vineyard. We have not been placed here to be passive observers; we are hired laborers. The *Planning for Mission* process is simply the way we are organizing our labor to ensure the maximum harvest.

Whether you are helping to lead a Local Parish Planning Team, volunteering to teach religious education, or simply committing to an hour of missional prayer each week, you are actively laboring in the vineyard. The work is demanding, but the Master is extraordinarily generous, and the harvest will be glorious.

**PRAYER**

*Lord of the Vineyard, thank You for the privilege of working in Your fields. Give me the strength and diligence to labor tirelessly for the salvation of my community. Amen.*

## Day 100 — August 31

### *The Dignity of Work*

---

As we approach Labor Day, it is fitting to reflect on the Christian understanding of work. Work is not a punishment for original sin; God gave humanity the command to “till and keep” the garden before the Fall. Work is a fundamental part of our human dignity and our participation in God’s ongoing creation.

This applies directly to our secular jobs. Your workplace is not just the place you earn a paycheck so you can support the Church; your workplace *is* the Church in action. You are the presence of Christ in the factory, the classroom, the office, and the farm.

The *Divine Renovation* model insists that parish life must equip the laity for this specific mission. When you do your job with absolute integrity, treat your coworkers with radical kindness, and bring the peace of Christ into stressful environments, you are doing the profound work of evangelization. You are sanctifying the secular world.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, You worked with Your hands as a carpenter in Nazareth.  
Sanctify my daily labor. Help me to view my secular job as a  
holy mission field for Your Kingdom. Amen.*

## Day 101 — September 1

### *Overcoming Apathy*

---

One of the greatest enemies of the Church today is not militant atheism or active persecution; it is simple, quiet apathy. It is the attitude of “good enough.” It is the temptation to look at declining Mass attendance and say, “Well, there’s nothing we can do about it, so let’s just keep our heads down and survive.”

Apathy is a spiritual poison. It directly contradicts the burning, urgent love of God the Father, who relentlessly seeks out His lost sheep. Bishop Cozzens’ *New Life* pastoral vision is a direct assault on the apathy of our age.

We must continually ask the Holy Spirit to awaken our hearts. We must fiercely guard against the comfort of the status quo. When we feel apathy creeping into our spiritual lives or into our parish councils, we must actively combat it by returning to the *kerygma*—reminding ourselves of the dramatic, life-or-death reality of the rescue mission Jesus accomplished on the Cross.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, deliver me from the poison of apathy. Keep the fire of Your love burning brightly in my heart, and give me a restless zeal for the salvation of souls. Amen.*

## Day 102 — September 2

### *The Power of the Small*

---

When we look at the immense challenges facing the Diocese of Crookston, it is easy to feel small and insignificant. How can our modest parishes possibly turn the tide of a rapidly secularizing culture?

Jesus answered this question perfectly when He compared the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is planted, it grows into a massive tree that provides shelter for the birds of the air. He also compared it to a tiny bit of yeast that works its way through an entire batch of dough.

God delights in using the small, the hidden, and the seemingly insignificant to accomplish His greatest victories. The faithful, quiet, persistent love of the parishioners at St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew is the mustard seed. Do not despise the small beginnings of our parish renewal. God is planting something today that will eventually provide spiritual shelter for our entire region.

**PRAYER**

*Lord, I offer You my small and seemingly insignificant efforts.  
Plant them like a mustard seed in our diocese, and grow them  
into a massive shelter of grace for our neighbors. Amen.*

## Day 103 — September 3

*Pope St. Gregory the Great — Servant of the Servants*

---

Today we celebrate Pope St. Gregory the Great. He lived during a time of immense political collapse and plague in Rome. Despite the chaos, he fundamentally reorganized the Church's charitable work, sent missionaries to evangelize England, and reformed the liturgy. He was one of the most powerful men in the world, yet he chose for himself the title: "Servant of the Servants of God."

This is the ultimate model for all parish and diocesan leadership. As we form Senior Leadership Teams and engage in the *Planning for Mission* process, anyone given authority must view it exclusively as an opportunity to serve.

Leadership in a renewed parish is about washing feet. It is about removing obstacles so that the laity can effectively use their charisms. When our parish structures are defined by this radical, humble servanthood, they become a beautiful reflection of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.

**PRAYER**

*Pope St. Gregory the Great, pray for all the leaders in our diocese. Obtain for them a spirit of profound humility, that they may govern always as servants of the servants of God. Amen.*

## Day 104 — September 4

### *Finding the 'Lost Coin'*

---

In Luke 15, Jesus tells the parable of a woman who loses one of her ten silver coins. She doesn't just write it off as an acceptable loss. She lights a lamp, sweeps the entire house, and searches diligently until she finds it. When she does, she calls her friends and neighbors together to rejoice.

Every parish has “lost coins”—individuals and families who used to sit in our pews but have quietly slipped away over the years. The *New Life* pastoral vision asks us to light the lamp and sweep the house.

We must actively seek out those who have drifted away. Sometimes, a simple phone call, a handwritten note, or a warm invitation to coffee is all it takes to bring someone back. We must let them know that their absence is felt, that they are deeply loved, and that the parish family is simply not complete without them.

**PRAYER**

*Jesus, give me the diligence of the woman searching for her lost coin. Bring to my mind the names of those who have drifted from our parish, and give me the courage to reach out to them. Amen.*

## Day 105 — September 5

*St. Teresa of Calcutta — Small Things with Great Love*

---

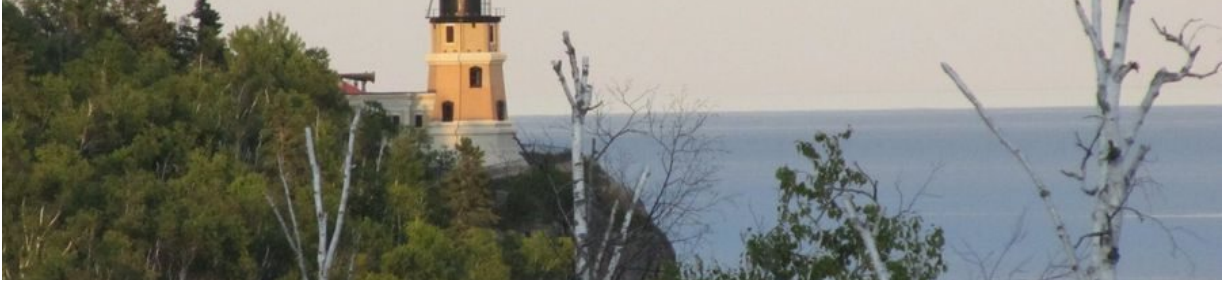
Today we honor St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa), who famously said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” She changed the world not by launching a massive global campaign, but by simply picking up one dying person at a time from the gutters of Calcutta and treating them like Jesus.

The work of evangelization and parish renewal is ultimately built on millions of small things done with great love. It is the extraordinary love with which you greet a stranger at the church door. It is the great love with which you prepare a meal for a sick neighbor.

As we prepare for the final weeks of this summer journey, let us stop looking for grand, sweeping programs to fix our parishes. Instead, let us commit to filling our daily, ordinary interactions with the extraordinary, self-giving love of Jesus Christ. That is the true engine of the New Evangelization.

**PRAYER**

*St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us. Teach our parish the profound secret of holiness: to do ordinary, small things with extraordinary, supernatural love. Amen.*



## **Week 16: The Triumph of the Cross**

*September 6 – September 14, 2026*

## Day 106 — September 6

### *The Illusion of Defeat*

---

When the disciples watched Jesus hang on the Cross on Good Friday, it looked like total, absolute defeat. The rescue mission appeared to be a catastrophic failure. Their leader was dead, their hopes were shattered, and the Roman Empire and the religious authorities had won.

Sometimes, when we look at the state of the Church today—the declining numbers, the cultural hostility, the lack of resources—we can be tempted to feel that same sense of Good Friday defeat. We can wonder if the mission of the Church is slowly failing.

But we know how the story ends. The Cross was not a defeat; it was the ultimate ambush. Jesus used the weapon of death to destroy death itself. The *ACTS XXIX* ministry reminds us constantly that we serve a God who specializes in bringing spectacular life out of apparent death. What looks like the decline of the Church today is merely the pruning before a glorious, unexpected Resurrection.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, when I am tempted by discouragement, remind me of the empty tomb. Help me to trust that You are always working behind the scenes to turn apparent defeat into glorious victory. Amen.*

## Day 107 — September 7

### *The Courage to be Weak*

---

St. Paul pleaded with God to remove a “thorn in the flesh” that was tormenting him. God’s response was, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul realized that when he was weak, God’s power could shine through him most clearly.

As a diocese, we are entering this *Planning for Mission* process from a position of structural weakness. We have fewer priests, fewer financial resources, and smaller congregations than we had in the past. But according to the logic of the Gospel, this is exactly where God wants us.

When a parish is wealthy and powerful, it is tempted to rely on its own strength. But when a parish is stripped down to its essentials, it is forced to rely entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Our current poverty of resources is a profound gift. It is the exact condition required for God to display His miraculous providing power.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, I thank You for our weaknesses and our limitations. Teach our parish to rely entirely on Your grace, knowing that Your power is made perfect in our poverty. Amen.*

## Day 108 — September 8

### *The Nativity of Mary — The Dawn of Hope*

---

Today we celebrate the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church has long compared her birth to the dawn breaking just before the sunrise. Before Mary was born, the world was trapped in the long, dark night of sin. Her birth was the joyful announcement that the Sun of Justice—Jesus Christ—was finally about to rise.

We are called to be the dawn for our local communities. In a world that is heavily burdened by the darkness of isolation, anxiety, and meaninglessness, the vibrant, renewed parishes of St. Elizabeth and St. Andrew must be the breaking light of hope on the horizon.

When our neighbors look at our parish family, they should see a community so full of life, joy, and peace that they immediately recognize the darkness is ending. Like Mary, our entire purpose as a Church is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to joyfully announce the coming of the Savior.

#### **PRAYER**

*Blessed Mother, as we celebrate your birth, teach us to be bearers of the dawn. Help our parish to shine brightly, preparing the way for the saving light of your Son. Amen.*

## Day 109 — September 9

### *Surrender as Strategy*

---

In the corporate world, success is achieved through aggressive control, precise management, and dominating the competition. But in the Kingdom of God, the ultimate strategy for success is total, unconditional surrender.

As we approach the end of our summer reflections, we must ask ourselves: Have we truly surrendered the *Planning for Mission* process to the Lord? Or are we still secretly trying to force our own agendas, protect our own favorite programs, and control the outcomes?

Fr. James Mallon in *Divine Renovation* notes that true parish renewal only begins when the pastor and the people collectively raise the white flag and say to the Holy Spirit, “We cannot do this without You. Take the wheel.” True surrender is terrifying because it requires giving up control, but it is the only path that leads to abundant new life.

**PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit, we surrender our parish to You. We lay down our agendas, our preferences, and our fears. Take complete control of our future, and lead us wherever You will. Amen.*

## Day 110 — September 10

### *The Kerygma as Our Compass*

---

As we prepare to step fully into the fall season and begin executing the plans we have discerned, we need a compass to keep us from drifting back into “maintenance mode.” That compass is the *kerygma*—the core message of the Gospel.

Every time a parish committee meets, every time a budget is drafted, and every time a new ministry is proposed, we must run it through the filter of the Gospel. Does this help people understand that they were created by a loving God? Does it help them realize their need for a Savior? Does it clearly introduce them to the rescuing love of Jesus Christ? And does it invite them to respond?

If a program or tradition does not ultimately serve this core message, it is a distraction. The *ACTS XXIX* mission is simple: keep the main thing the main thing. Let us ensure that the explosive, life-changing message of Jesus Christ remains the undisputed center of our parish life.

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, keep our eyes fixed on the Gospel. Let the core message of Your saving love be the compass that guides every decision, every program, and every budget in our parish. Amen.*

## Day 111 — September 11

### *An Apostolic People*

---

The word “apostle” comes from a Greek word meaning “one who is sent.” At the end of every Mass, we are sent out. Bishop Cozzens is calling the Diocese of Crookston to become an apostolic people once again.

This means we no longer expect people to magically wander into our church buildings. An apostolic people goes out to find them. They view their neighborhoods, their schools, and their workplaces not as secular spaces to endure, but as mission fields to conquer with love.

When a parish shifts from being a “gathering place” to being a “sending center,” everything changes. We gather on Sunday to be nourished, healed, and equipped, but Monday through Saturday is when the true work of the Church happens. Let us ask the Lord for an apostolic heart, ready to be sent wherever He needs us most.

#### **PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, You have sent me into the world just as the Father sent You. Give me the courage of an apostle, and use my life to bring Your rescuing love to those who need it most. Amen.*

## Day 112 — September 12

### *The Most Holy Name of Mary*

---

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary. In ancient times, a name was not just a label; it carried the essence, power, and mission of the person. Mary's name is synonymous with perfect surrender to the will of God. Her *fiat*—"let it be done to me according to your word"—is the ultimate blueprint for all parish renewal.

As we finalize our summer of prayerful planning, we must continually echo Mary's surrender. The pastoral plans we have made, the structures we have evaluated, and the regional outreach we have envisioned will only bear fruit if they are completely surrendered to God.

Mary does not keep anything for herself; she always directs our gaze to Jesus. When we call upon her name, she gently takes our feeble efforts, our parish plans, and our missional prayers, and she places them directly into the Sacred Heart of her Son.

**PRAYER**

*Mary, Mother of the Church, we entrust all our parish planning and evangelization efforts to your holy name. Guide us always to do whatever your Son tells us. Amen.*

## Day 113 — September 13

### *The Eve of the Exaltation*

---

Tomorrow, we will celebrate the great Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. For the last 113 days, we have walked through a massive, regional vision for renewal. We have reflected deeply on the power of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of structural change, the beauty of shared leadership, and the urgent need to share the Gospel.

But tonight, on the eve of the Exaltation, we must strip all of those details away and look at the absolute center of our faith: the wood of the Cross.

Without the Cross, our parish programs are just social clubs.

Without the Cross, our diocesan planning is just corporate management. The Cross is the only reason we have any Good News to share. It is the definitive proof that God loves us so much that He would rather die than spend eternity without us.

#### **PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, as we prepare to celebrate the Triumph of Your Cross, rivet our eyes on Your sacrifice. Let the love You showed on Calvary be the absolute center of our parish life. Amen.*

## Day 114 — September 14

### *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*

---

We have reached the culmination of our summer journey. Today, the Church does something that looks utterly foolish to the secular world: we exalt, celebrate, and lift up an instrument of torture and death.

Why do we exalt the Cross? Because it is the weapon Jesus used to accomplish the greatest rescue mission in the history of the universe. The Cross is not a symbol of defeat; it is the definitive victory over sin, death, and despair.

This is the message our broken world so desperately needs. This is the truth that Bishop Cozzens is calling us to boldly proclaim. When we look at the challenges facing the Diocese of Crookston—the shifting demographics, the limited resources, the weary culture—we do not despair, because we know the war has already been won. Our mission now is simple: to hold the Cross high so that everyone in Dilworth, Hawley, and beyond can see it and be saved. Let us step boldly into this new apostolic age, entirely confident in the triumphant, unstoppable love of Jesus Christ. The best days of our Church are not behind us; they are ahead of us. Let us go forth and claim them.

**PRAYER**

*We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world! Fill our parish with the triumphant joy of Your victory, today and forever. Amen.*

## Conclusion: The 29th Chapter

You have reached the end of this summer journey, but the true work is only just beginning. Over the last several months, we have prayed for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have examined the hard realities of our mission field, and we have walked step-by-step through the explosive, life-changing message of the Gospel.

We have learned that the Church does not exist for herself; she exists to evangelize. We have learned that every baptized person is called to be an everyday missionary, bringing the light of Christ into our homes, our workplaces, and our neighborhoods.

The Acts of the Apostles in the Bible contains 28 chapters detailing the incredible bravery of the early Church. But the story did not end there. You and I are currently living and writing the 29th chapter. The Diocese of Crookston is our specific territory, and God has equipped us with everything we need to see a massive spiritual harvest in our lifetime.

### What are the next steps?

**Stay Engaged:** As the Local Parish Planning Teams continue to finalize and implement the new regional plans, stay informed. Read

the bulletin, attend parish meetings, and actively support the changes that are being made for the sake of the mission.

**Serve with Your Gifts:** Do not go back to the sidelines. Ask the Holy Spirit where you are being called to serve in this new season.

**Keep Praying for the Lost:** Make missional prayer a permanent part of your daily routine. Continue interceding for the family members, friends, and neighbors who need to know the rescuing love of Jesus.

The wood of the Cross has triumphed. The tomb is empty. Let us go out and joyfully share the *New Life* of our God with the world.

## Resources to Read More

1. Diocese of Crookston: Planning for Mission — [www.crookston.org/planning](http://www.crookston.org/planning)
2. Divine Renovation Ministry — [divinerenovation.org](http://divinerenovation.org)
3. ACTS XXIX Ministry — [www.actsxxix.org](http://www.actsxxix.org)