



DIOCESE OF  
**ST AUGUSTINE**

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY  
**2019-2021**



*Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may all be holy.*

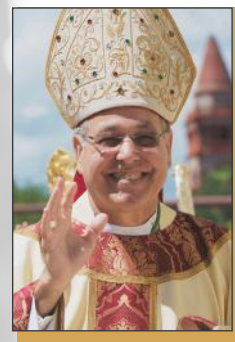
*Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my work, too, may be holy.*

*Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
that I love but what is holy.*

*Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
to defend all that is holy.*

*Guard me then, O Holy Spirit,  
that I always may be holy.*

*Amen.*



**My dear  
faithful  
of the  
Diocese of  
St. Augustine:**

**Grace and  
peace to you!**  
I am most  
grateful to you

for your faith and passion to be a Eucharistic-centered people, drawn together as one family in the Lord. Beginning with our listening session and continuing with insights from many across the diocese, your strong desires have shaped this strategic plan.

Introducing all people to the Gospel and therefore putting them in relationship with Jesus Christ, begins with conversion, a change in the heart, an introduction to the fullness of the life-giving message found in the Gospel. We are committed to more effectively reaching all people in our diverse diocese to engage them in the formational mission of the Church.

Another need you expressed to me was a broader outreach to all people in all cultures as well as our Christian brothers and sisters, and indeed this must be a focus for our Church in today's society. We are called to advocate and serve the many needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our communities. How much greater works we can accomplish as

we work together with people of all faiths, connected by a shared purpose and profound respect for all of our brothers and sisters.

As baptized Christians, we are members of the Body of Christ, therefore, "we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25). This incorporation into communion with one another, this uniquely designed Body, drives us to find more and better ways to exist as one beautifully imaged garment woven of many threads.

While diverse in populations and gifts, our beloved diocese is strong and driven to communicate our beautiful faith to all. In listening to you, the faithful, I am confident that over the next few years, we can travel a path to better ways to form, inform, and transform one another into truly Eucharistic-centered people who find their strength, their very center, in Jesus Christ. This will take the efforts and energy of all.

Let us continue the good work begun here in 1565 with the first Mass, as missionary discipleship took its first steps in North America. I trust that you will join with me in our shared mission, "to go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19).

+ v. i. Estévez

**Bishop Felipe J. Estévez**





## BACKGROUND

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### *Discerning the Strategic Direction for our Diocese*

The foundation of our strategy was based on themes that emerged during seven listening sessions and a diocesan-wide survey in the fall 2016. The passion and insights of our many members led to our discernment of our vision, mission and overarching strategies.

Many hours of discussion and input from a core strategy group comprised of a cross-functional team from a number of ministries and some pastors provided further direction. This group gave careful consideration to the broader external strategic forces at work that are impacting the needs and the direction of the diocese.

We are grateful for the wise counsel we received from the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Presbyteral Council, and deaneries.

By the very nature of our rich diverse diocese, the initiatives that support the execution of these strategies will reflect the unique needs of each parish and deanery, our ministries, and ultimately, our different communities. However they should all tie to the strategies summarized in this document to enable us to move forward as a diocese to achieve our vision of becoming **ONE** while developing missionary disciples.

The first cut of these initiatives has been developed by the executive offices of the diocesan administration, the presbyteral council, the diocesan pastoral council and were further refined with input from each deanery and the executive directors of the diocese.

Efforts have been taken to reconcile the overarching, compelling strategies found in the USCCB's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and to incorporate applicable guidance from Pope Francis' apostolic exhortations, *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

We have also integrated our vision and mission into the pastoral letter on stewardship, the Florida Eucharistic Congresses and the 2020 celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

The vision of the USCCB's 2017–2020 Strategic Plan is “Encountering the Mercy of Christ and Accompanying His People with Joy.” It is in the “encounter” and the “accompaniment” where we authentically live out our Eucharist-centered life in welcoming all peoples to be one with, and in Christ and changing the culture to become more welcoming and inclusive.



## OUR VISION

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*“So that they may all be one.”*

(JOHN 17:21)

## OUR MISSION

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*“Go and make disciples  
of all nations.”*

(MATTHEW 28:19)



# Who we are as Missionary Disciples

## Attributes of a Missionary Disciple

Missionary disciples make their whole life a “Eucharist.” They are thankful, loving, and are builders of communion within the Church and out to the world. They are knowledgeable, articulate and creative. They are endowed with a selfless spirit for action and accompaniment. They inspire others because they joyfully live virtuous lives of faith, hope and charity; always seeking unity within the Body of Christ.

## Guiding Principles

Guiding principles offer philosophical guides that underwrite our actions irrespective of changes to our strategies, goals, type of work, or changes in leadership. They describe the attitudes from which missionary disciples engage this strategy, their community, and others we accompany along the way. The bishop has identified the following as principles to guide us in this strategy:

- ⊕ A poor church that lives with and for the poor
- ⊕ A life that is truly Eucharistic and Mass-centered
- ⊕ A church united and welcoming of diversity
- ⊕ Generous stewards of all our blessings and gifts.
- ⊕ A people who communicate with compassion while adhering to the truth of the Gospel

## COMPELLING STRATEGIES

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*What defines our vocation as missionary disciples*



### FORMATION

We must become a diocese of inquiry, dialogue and learning, organizing and integrating formation opportunities at all levels that will provide support and assistance to parishes and communities in their efforts to form lifelong missionary disciples and enable them to carry out their mission to answer their baptismal call to holiness.



### ACCOMPANIMENT

To understand one’s vocation in life, we must nurture, foster and mentor the faithful to live joyful and Eucharist-centered lives, including those in single life, married life, family life and total consecrated life. We must invite and welcome all to experience the rich sacramental traditions of the Catholic Church, while supporting the continuing formation of all the faithful in every stage of the faith-life cycle.



### OUTREACH

We must be joyful missionary disciples of Christ, sharing our God-given gifts for the common good of the Church and our communities.





## FORMATION

### The Priority Objective

Ignite and fan the flame of desire to grow ever closer to Jesus Christ and the Church.

### Complementary Objectives

- ✚ Communicate the message of the Gospel in clear language with messaging that feels relevant to all, regardless of where they are in their faith journey.
- ✚ Encourage the faithful to advance their quest to holiness with materials and training in the language and location that supports their journey.
- ✚ Engage and form youth in Catholic Schools and Parish Religious Education Programs, providing committed, passionate and well-formed teachers and a clear path of involvement for parents.
- ✚ Foster deep-seated commitment to weekly celebration of the Eucharist and a life rooted in prayer and thanksgiving.
- ✚ Provide meaningful, ongoing formation to clergy, religious and lay ministers.
- ✚ Organize and integrate formation opportunities at all levels, providing support and assistance to parishes.



## ACCOMPANIMENT

### The Priority Objective

Joyfully welcome all our brothers and sisters and ensure every believer has access to all applicable sacraments so that they may thoughtfully discern God's plan and vocation for them while living in close relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church.

### Complementary Objectives

- ✚ Embrace new communication styles and use of digital media to meet specific needs of parishes and their ministries.
- ✚ Understand the rich diversity of our diocese, by recording, preserving, and sharing the history of our parishes and people.
- ✚ Strengthen family life by providing networks and resources to assist parents/guardians in their roles as primary educators of their children in the way of living the faith.
- ✚ Develop ministries to meet people where they are in their journey of faith based on situational need, states of life, and career, e.g., single, newly married, married with young children, grandparents, high school or college, divorced or widowed.
- ✚ Seek collaborative and creative opportunities for "unity." Share resources and talent in support of sister parishes in the local area or across the diocese (such as "twinning") or reach out to build bridges between the institutional church and all of God's people.





## OUTREACH

### The Priority Objective

That the faithful, as missionary disciples, will have the support and encouragement they need to put their faith into action providing nourishment, care and assistance to the poor and others in need.

### Complementary Objectives

- ✚ Boldly and actively engage in the public square and out into the world to shape the conversation and advocate for freedom of religion, the dignity of the human person and care for all of God's creation.
- ✚ Promote Catholic social teachings with special emphasis on advocacy for the poor, disenfranchised, immigrants and refugees.
- ✚ Provide healing and protection to all victims of violence, especially those who have suffered sexual abuse.
- ✚ Develop events and programs throughout the geographic reach of the diocese to engage the under-churched, unchurched and unaffiliated.

### Principles of Catholic Social Teaching



Life & Dignity of the Human Person



Call to Family, Community & Participation



Rights and Responsibilities



Option for the Poor



The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers



Solidarity



Care for God's Creation

Learn more about Catholic Social Teaching at <https://bit.ly/1lti9gt>



## DESIRED OUTCOMES

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*How we move forward as Missionary Disciples*







## FORMATION

That by January 2020, every parish/mission and school of the Diocese of St. Augustine will have identified and put in place a program of entry into “relationship” with Jesus Christ.

### ACTIVITIES

**SEPT  
2019**

**By September 15, 2019**, assess available programs and related resource requirements of programs. (Examples of such programs could include: Alpha process, Kerygma process, and the Paulist Evangelization process). The Office of Christian Formation will provide access to information on several resources.

**NOV  
2019**

**By November 2019**, evaluate internal capacity to support delivery of such programs; develop, organize, train and resource the ministry to enroll and deliver the program to the faithful.

**JAN  
2020**

**By January 2020**, develop and have a plan in-place to communicate and share the ministry with others in the diocese.

#### Related Activities

- ⊕ Parish schools will develop an operational plan that integrates with and supports the goals of parish pastoral plans and programs.
- ⊕ Realizing that not every parish/mission or school may have the same internal capacity to achieve this objective on their own, “twinning” with other entities in a region is encouraged where beneficial.



## ACCOMPANIMENT

By 2021, the faithful, as missionary disciples, will know that they have in the Church the support they need to discern and live their vocation; that the disaffiliated all know they are truly welcome in the Church; and that all are united more closely to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and as one body, the Church.

### ACTIVITIES

**JAN  
2020**

**By January 2020**, complete a needs assessment to evaluate the welcoming culture and practices/programs.

**JAN  
2020**

**By January 2020**, assess and identify the *disaffiliated* – disenfranchised and marginalized – of the community and their needs (for instance, what stands between them and the sacraments or full-communion with the Church).

**JAN  
2020**

**By January 2020**, assess and identify the needs of the faithful in discerning their vocation and response to their baptismal call.

**JAN  
2021**

**By January 2021**, develop and have in-place programs and ministries to address the needs and strengthen internal capacity to tangibly evaluate, support, and address the needs of the faithful in their walk of faith. (Exemplar practice is to meet with families and develop family-faith/vocation plans).

#### Related Activities

- ⊕ Parish schools will develop an operational plan that integrates with and supports the goals of parish pastoral plans and programs.
- ⊕ Realizing that not every parish/mission or school may have the same internal capacity to achieve this objective on their own, “twinning” with other entities in a region is encouraged where beneficial.





## OUTREACH

That by July 2020, every parish/mission and school of the Diocese of St. Augustine will identify and train an *outreach programs coordinator*, knowledgeable and articulate in “Catholic Social Teaching” and existing Catholic support programs. There will be an increased awareness of the unmet needs in the local community and an improved internal capacity to assist and encourage the faithful in their efforts to answer their baptismal call as missionary disciples.

### ACTIVITIES

**END  
2019**

**By the end of calendar year 2019**, assess unmet needs in the local community and identify available resources capable of providing assistance. Evaluate internal capacity to support and match skills, interests and resources to minister to the unmet need. (Exemplar programs and resources include: Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services).

**END  
2019**

**By end of calendar year 2019**, prioritize and select at least one outreach opportunity to serve a previously unmet need in the local community.

**JUL  
2020**

**By the start of Fiscal Year 2021**; develop and have a plan in-place to communicate and share the ministry with others in the diocese.

### Related Activities

- ✚ Parish schools will develop an operational plan that integrates with and supports the goals of parish pastoral plans and programs.
- ✚ Realizing that not every parish/mission or school may have the same internal capacity to achieve this objective on their own, “twinning” with other entities in a region is encouraged where beneficial.

## COAT OF ARMS & NEW LOGO

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*Reflect our history and enduring mission*



The coat of arms, or “shield,” of the Diocese of St. Augustine reflects the diocese’s titular patron – St. Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) – as well as the history of the area of Florida that comprises the diocese.

The field, or background, quartered red (gules) and silver (argent) are reminiscent of the Spanish roots of Florida and the See City of St. Augustine which was founded in 1565. In the royal arms of Spain the fields of Castile and Leon are of these tinctures. The arms of Castile have a red field while those of Leon have one of silver. The main symbol of the field, a flaming heart transfixing by an arrow in gold (or), is of the human heart transfixing by a deeply yearning love and desire. This is the traditional emblem of St. Augustine of Hippo depicting his famous quotation from his *Confessions*: “Our hearts shall ever restless be, until they find their rest in Thee.”



The new logo reflects and enhances the new strategic vision and mission of the Diocese of St. Augustine as promulgated by Bishop Felipe Estévez in his fall 2017 pastoral letter, *So That They May All Be One*. It connects us with the shield and captures the essence of our diocese which is rooted in a history of missionary spirit that inspired the first steps of faith in these United States.

Centered on the heart is a silhouette of the Great Cross, a landmark of our faith. We are also reminded that the heart of our work is carried out through vibrant ministries, schools and parish communities of the faithful enriched by diversity and strengthened by the Eucharist to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

The total effect emotes the passion of our patron and our legacy of evangelization and making missionary disciples in our diocese that is home to the oldest parish in today’s United States.



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