

## Guiding Principles of the Post 2020 Plan – Part III

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We continue our walk through the list of “**Guiding Principles**” that form the heart of our Post 2020 planning vision and process. This month I would like to explore principles three and four to discover how they give shape to our leadership and provide a vision for the future Church.

The third principle challenges us to be “**Focused on growth of the Church** and Her mission with confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit unleashed at Pentecost.” This might sound simple at first, but this statement is packed with nuance and meaning. All at once it is a leadership decision, a leadership direction, and a statement of faith. Let’s unpack this some more.

It is a leadership decision to be optimistic and forward moving or pessimistic and fatalistic. Let’s make no mistake, it’s easy to be pessimistic as leaders in the Church today. Mass attendance is declining, many young people are opting out of religion entirely, and the sexual abuse scandal still looms large. It would be easy to throw up our hands and give up, feeling all is lost.

But leaders choose their attitude. More to the point, true leaders always choose an optimistic stance, focusing on how to move forward with joy and purpose. And here’s the key thing – our leadership attitude fundamentally determines our leadership direction! So real leaders choose to be optimistic and, thus, focus on the growth possibilities of the Church.

The third principle is also a daring statement of faith. It affirms that everything is possible because Jesus died for our sins and conquered everything by rising from the dead. And His promise of the Advocate has been fulfilled through the unleashing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost! The Church will grow, not because of us, but because of the Power of God.

The fourth principle of missionary leadership and planning invites us into “**Strengthening the Catholic impact** by identifying and coordinating effective ways for parishes and schools to collaborate in advancing the Church’s mission.” This principle echoes a guiding principle of the Church herself – we are stronger together than we are apart. Community is our identity!

If the Catholic impact is to be strengthened and the Church’s mission is to be advanced, we all need to be pulling in the same direction. And the only way for that to happen is for us to be working less on our own and more in collaboration. There are many parishes and schools, but there is only one Church of Jesus Christ with His singular mission to “make disciples.”

### **Leading People to Christ: Guiding Principles for Parish and School Planning in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

- **Rooted in fervent prayer** and reliant upon the Divine Providence of God.

- **Mission-driven** with a singular focus on proclaiming Christ and making disciples through the Sacramental Life of the Church.
  - **Focused on growth of the Church** and Her mission with confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit unleashed at Pentecost.
  - **Strengthening the Catholic impact** by identifying and coordinating effective ways for parishes and schools to collaborate in advancing the Church's mission.
  - **Accompanying ordained and lay leaders** by supporting them, affirming their gifts, and equipping them for missionary leadership.
  - **Practicing subsidiarity** to ensure that planning initiatives are designed, owned, and implemented through broad consultation and local collaboration, under the authority of the archbishop.
  - **Allowing for new models of leadership and mission** that are both faithful to the Church's Tradition and bold in missionary outreach, especially in urban and rural contexts.
- ) **Data-informed** to ensure that planning initiatives are grounded in key indicators such as financial sustainability, potential for growth, facility analysis, sacramental trends, producing vocations, etc.