

DIOCESE OF RALEIGH

MINISTRY PRIORITIES



Bishop's Priorities

As Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama shepherds the Diocese of Raleigh into its next centenary, after prayer and discernment, consultation with the presbyterate and lay faithful, and guided by the evangelical and missionary spirit at the heart of "the best diocese in the world," Bishop Luis offers the following as priorities for our collective ministry in eastern North Carolina.

Mission Focus

Guided by the teachings of Christ, the Diocese of Raleigh is committed to authentically living out Catholic values, promoting the dignity of every person, advancing evangelization, fostering vocations, strengthening families, retaining youth, expanding Catholic education, and ensuring sustainable stewardship.

MINISTRY PRIORITIES



EVANGELIZATION AND MISSIONARY SPIRIT



Prioritizing evangelization by adapting to modern challenges, fostering a deeper understanding of faith-based love, and encouraging meaningful lives through listening and leadership.

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Matthew 28:19–20

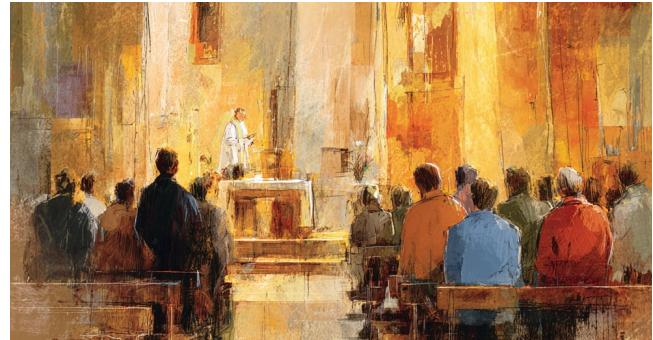
"The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father."

*2nd Vatican Council
(Ad gentes #2)*

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.

*Pope Francis
Evangelii Gaudium 24*

VOCATIONS AND PRIESTHOOD



Promoting vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life through prayer, activities, and education to inspire individuals to respond to God's call.

"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

Matthew 9:37–38

The journey of priestly formation begins at Baptism, when the new disciple of Jesus Christ begins to live the call to follow Christ in holiness. It is the same call disciples of Jesus have received since the foundation of the Church. St. John Paul II described seminary formation as "a continuation in the Church of the apostolic community gathered about Jesus, listening to his word, proceeding toward the Easter experience, awaiting the gift of the Spirit for the mission." This singular "journey of discipleship," begun in Baptism, "comes to be appreciated as the center of one's life at the beginning of Seminary formation, and continues through the whole of life."

*Program of Priestly Formation,
10th edition*

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HUMAN DIGNITY AND LIFE



Affirming the intrinsic value of every human from conception to natural death, transforming culture through ministries that prioritize love, community, and holistic well-being.

"See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God."

1 John 3:1

Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter. This principle, which is fully recognizable even by reason alone, underlies the primacy of the human person and the protection of human rights. In the light of Revelation, the Church resolutely reiterates and confirms the ontological dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed in Jesus Christ. From this truth, the Church draws the reasons for her commitment to the weak and those less endowed with power, always insisting on "the primacy of the human person and the defense of his or her dignity beyond every circumstance."

*2024 DECLARATION "DIGNITAS INFINITA"
ON HUMAN DIGNITY from the Dicastery for
the Doctrine of the Faith*

"And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Gospel of Matthew 25:40

MARRIAGE & FAMILY



Supporting marriage as a divine institution, valuing family life, and advocating for policies that strengthen families and protect religious liberty.

*"So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
Therefore, what God has joined together, no
human being must separate."*

Matthew 19:6

"The Synod Fathers observed that "the initial years of marriage are a vital and sensitive period during which couples become more aware of the challenges and meaning of married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment needs to go beyond the actual celebration of the sacrament (Familiaris Consortio, Part III). In this regard, experienced couples have an important role to play. The parish is a place where such experienced couples can help younger couples, with the eventual cooperation associations, ecclesial movements and new communities."

*Pope Francis
Amoris Laetitia 223*



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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Retaining youth in the Church through personal encounters with Jesus and teaching Catholic values, moving beyond traditional class-based formation.

"Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe."

1 Timothy 4:12

"Dear young people, aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less. Then you will see the light of the Gospel grow every day, within you and around you."

*Pope Leo XIV homily to youth
at the Jubilee for Young People*

CATHOLIC EDUCATION EXPANSION



Enhancing access to and sustainability of Catholic education, supporting existing schools, and investing in new schools, especially in high-density areas.

"Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 22:6

"Today, in the face of rapid change and disorienting uncertainties, [the legacy of Catholic education] is showing surprising resilience. Where educational communities allow themselves to be guided by the word of Christ, they do not retreat, but are revitalized; they do not build walls, but bridges. They respond with creativity, opening up new possibilities for the transmission of knowledge and meaning in schools, universities, professional and civic training, school and youth ministry, and research, because the Gospel does not grow old but makes "all things new" (Rev 21:5). Each generation hears it as a regenerating novelty. Each generation is responsible for the Gospel and for discovering its seminal and multiplying power."

*Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIV
DRAWING NEW MAPS OF HOPE*



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STEWARDSHIP AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Encouraging the sharing of time, talent, and treasure to meet community needs and planning for efficient growth in a rapidly expanding diocese.

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

1 Peter 4:10



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH