



**Final General Session of the
4th Synod of the Diocese of Bridgeport
Mission Statement and Guiding Principles**

May 30, 2015

Background

At the Third General Session of the Synod on February 7, 2015, the Delegates voted upon and approved five Global Challenges. These challenges will continue to be the primary focus for the coming months. The adoption of these challenges followed months of study and revisions by the Delegates, Study Committees and Synod Commission, working in collaboration with Bishop Caggiano.

The following General Sessions of the Synod on March 21, 2015 and May 9, 2015 gave us an opportunity to seek direction on how to respond to these challenges. Again, through the work of Study Committees, the Synod Office and the Bishop, concrete initiatives and proposals were formulated.

The twelve Initiatives and Proposals approved on May 30th are prefaced by the Mission Statement and Ten Principles, which will guide us throughout the process of planning for the future of the Church in Fairfield County. The Mission Statement and the Ten Principles (as a whole) were approved overwhelmingly on May 30.

Vote #1:

Mission Statement

Our common mission is to foster personal conversion and deepen each disciple's relationship with the Lord Jesus in the community of the Catholic Church.

Ten principles that will support and animate all that we will do to effect change in our Diocese.

- **Principle of Continuity:** To recognize and build upon the good that already exists within the Diocese while discerning ways to bring about substantial and lasting change for our future.
- **Principle of Subsidiarity:** The Diocese must not take from the parishes, schools and local communities the decision-making that rightfully belongs to these communities. And at the same time, the Diocese needs to be held accountable for those initiatives that no one parish can do on its own.
- **Principle of Accompaniment:** We must recognize, respect and assist each person's individual journey of faith.
- **Principle of Sharing and Collaboration:** Collaboration is when we agree to do something that is needed, using all of our gifts, talents and positions of authority, while keeping our eye on Christ.
- **Evangelical Outreach:** As an essential piece of pastoral planning, each parish and school community is asked to foster a culture of evangelization by making such efforts an intentional part of all parish pastoral plans, and by including evangelization as an integral component of every plan and function of Diocesan leadership.
- **Principle of Unity in Diversity:** We must celebrate our cultural and ethnic diversity in every aspect of our ecclesial life. We will also work to build bridges within our faith communities, to other Christian faiths, and among all people of faith.

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- **Principle of Creativity:** The Diocesan Curia, parishes and schools must creatively respond to the changing demographics in Fairfield County and the needs of our people.
- **Empower the Young Church:** Parishes and Diocesan leadership will be ever reminded to include the young church in all our initiatives, by recognizing that they are not the “church of the future”, but are present now in our midst.
- **Principle of Accountability:** We must hold ourselves accountable to ongoing evaluation of the initiatives and projects we approve by using quantitative and qualitative benchmarks to measure our progress.
- **Principle of Transparency:** Decision-making on every level must be clear and based upon facts, data, and ongoing communication.