



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

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May 18, 2026

My Dear Brother Priests,

Greetings in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ!

As we continue to move with purpose into the Share Jesus years of our Discipleship Pathway, I want to invite each of you to incorporate our three diocesan goals into your future planning and ministry. In our discipleship journey, we continue to Discover Jesus, Follow Jesus, and Worship Jesus. Now is the time to invite the Holy Spirit more deeply into our lives and ministry as we, like the Apostles before us, depart the Upper Room filled with the Holy Spirit to Share Jesus with everyone we meet.

One important way to live out this mission within your parish is to incorporate our diocesan goals into your planning and ministry. Our two diocesan goals had end dates of 2026. We made extraordinary progress in forming missionary disciples and saw an increase in vocations to the priesthood. I do not want this momentum to end. Thus, I am renewing these two diocesan goals with a new emphasis and language:

Discipleship: By 2028, we will have at least 60 parishes committed to becoming parishes of missionary disciples through intentionally sharing Jesus with the faithful, the fallen away, and the unchurched in their mission field.

Vocations: By 2028, we will call forth, form and sustain at least 35 seminarians to be missionary leaders in the priesthood through building and living a culture of vocations.

By continuing to focus intentionally on becoming parishes that form missionary disciples who reach out to every member of our mission field (our parish geographic boundaries), I am confident we will also be raising up future vocations. It is essential that both continue. Yet, as I prayed about these updated goals, the Lord continued to place a new desire on my heart. How do we as Catholics reclaim Sunday as the Lord's Day where more souls can be nourished by Christ in the Eucharist? I realized over time, this needs to become a vital third goal for us as a Diocese:

Reclaiming Sunday: By 2028, we will increase Sunday Mass attendance by at least 10% through reclaiming Sunday as the Lord's Day for worship, rest and charitable service.

Reclaiming Sunday as Catholics requires that we learn to rest in the Lord. Genesis 2: 2-3 reminds us that God made the seventh day holy and rested on that day. We are made in the image and likeness of God (Gn. 1:27), so we too ought to rest in the Lord on this day. We most often do this within the context of our family life. I encourage all Catholics to reserve time on Saturdays for weekend shopping and chores and to devote Sundays to the Lord and to families. You might eat dinner as a family each Sunday (and have a dessert with it!). Reclaiming Sunday also means we can live the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy on Sunday to bless those who may be in need. But most especially, as a family or individuals, we pray Mass with our parish family every Sunday and invite others to do so along with us. Reclaiming Sunday will transform our lives and the culture around us.

Each time I shared these updated goals in Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and other advisory bodies, it has always been met with appreciation. The need for them was evident. I believe these goals will be more easily accomplished as we learn to know and love the Holy Spirit and welcome Him more deeply into our lives, as we are invited to do in *Sent on Mission: A Pastoral Invitation to Share Jesus with Others* (digitally available at dioc.io/pastoralinvitation). It is only through the power and action of the Holy Spirit that we can raise up missionary disciples, vocations and reclaim Sunday for the Lord. I will be announcing these goals publicly on Trinity Sunday, May 31, 2026.

Thank you all who contributed to the formulation of these goals. And thank you to everyone and every parish that will incorporate these goals into your planning and your ministry. Please be assured that additional resources (videos, training and print resources) will be shared with you as they become available. Finally, be assured of my prayers for each of you as you continue to Share Jesus with your parishes and everyone under your care.

With hope-filled prayers of gratitude for you and the people of your parish communities, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Ricken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL
Bishop of Green Bay